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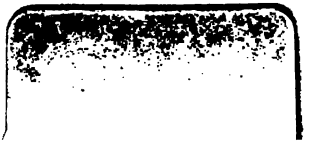

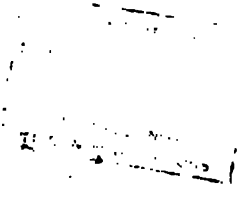

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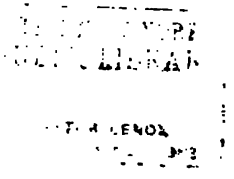

THE

WORKS

OF

THOMAS HOOD.

EDITED BY EPES SARGENT.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
GEORGE P. PUTNAM, BROADWAY.
1864.

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PREFACE.

THE present edition of the Poetical Works of THOMAS HOOD is by far the most complete that has yet appeared, and will be followed by a collection of his Prose Works in a similar style. Though very many poems have been here brought together from sources overlooked by his former editors, nothing has been admitted that will detract from the fame of one whom a critic of kindred but severer genius describes as "the delightful humorist," who in society was "so grave, and sad, and silent, that you were astonished to recognize in him the outpourer of a thousand wild fancies, the detector of the inmost springs of pathos, and the powerful vindicator of poverty and toil before the hearts of the prosperous."

The reputation of HOOD as a poet and humorist has increased with every year since his decease. As a humorous poet, indeed, there is no one similar or second to him. This is the judgment of a circle of readers daily enlarging, and

as various as mankind. There is nothing in the language more touching than his pathos, more genial than his humor, more polished and keen than his satire. For twenty years he lavished this satire, humor and pathos with a prodigality that knew no bounds, and for this very prodigality the world undervalued till it had lost him. Popular as he was in his latter years, in his life-time he was but half appreciated, and it is only since his death that he has challenged his position in the foremost line of the world's humorists.

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LIFE OF THOMAS HOOD.

THOMAS HOOD was born in London in 1798. His father was a native of Scotland, and was for many years a partner in the firm of Vernor, Hood and Sharp, booksellers and publishers. Of his early life he has given the public an outline in his Literary Reminiscences, in which he tells us that when but twelve years of age he lost his father and elder brother, and became thenceforth the chief care of an affectionate and bereaved mother. From a brief memoir by Mrs. S. C. Hall we learn that he was remarkable for great vivacity of spirits, and prone to astonish good citizens, guests at his father's, no less than his fellow-pupils when at school, by the shrewdness and brilliancy of his observations upon topics of which it was thought he knew nothing. At a high school to which he was sent he picked up *some* Latin, became a tolerable English grammarian, and so good a French scholar that he earned a few guineas — his first literary fee — by revising for the press a new edition of "Paul et Virginie." A friend of the family, however, proposed to initiate him into the profitable mysteries of commerce, and young Hood found himself planted on a counting-house stool, where he remained long enough, at least, to collect materials for a sonnet, in which he records his mercantile experiences.

> "Time was, I sat upon a lofty stool,
> At lofty desk, and with a clerkly pen
> Began each morning, at the stroke of ten,
> To write in Bell and Co.'s commercial school;
> In Warnford Court, a shady nook and cool,

The favorite retreat of merchant men ;
Yet would my pen turn vagrant even then,
And take stray dips in the Castalian pool.
Now double entry — now a flowery trope —
Mingling poetic honey with trade wax —
Blogg, Brothers — Milton — Grote and Prescott — Pope
Bristles — and Hogg — Glyn Mills and Halifax —
Rogers — and Towgood — Hemp — the Bard of Hope
Barilla — Byron — Tallow — Burns — and Flax ! "

His health failing, he was " shipped as per advice, in a S smack," to his father's relations in Dundee. There he made hi acquaintance with the press, an event of so much interest i career of an author that no one can describe it but himself. A the temporary sojourners in his boarding-house at Dundee v legal antiquary, who had been sent for from Edinburgh to some researches among the civic records. " It was my hum think," says Hood, " that, in Political as well as Domestic Ecor it must be better to sweep the Present than to dust the Past certain new brooms were recommended to the Town Council quizzing letter, which the then editor of the *Dundee Adverti Chronicle* thought fit to favor with a prominent place in his col ' 'T is pleasant sure,' sings Lord Byron, ' to see one's self in p and according to the popular notion I ought to have been qui in my stirrups, if not standing on the saddle, at thus seeing m for the first strange time, set up in type. Memory recalls, hov but a very moderate share of exaltation, which was totally ecl moreover, by the exuberant transports of an accessory befor fact, whom, methinks, I still see in my mind's eye, rushing o the printing-office with the wet sheet steaming in his hand, and tering all along the High Street, to announce breathlessly tha were in.' But G. was an indifferent scholar, even in Englis therefore thought the more highly of this literary feat.

" The reception of my letter in the Dundee newspaper encou me to forward a contribution to the *Dundee Magazine*, the of which was kind enough, as Winifred Jenkins says, to ' wra bit of nonsense under his Honor's Kiver,' without charging any for its insertion. Here was success sufficient to turn a young a at once into ' a scribbling miller,' and make him sell himself,

and soul, after the German fashion, to that minor Mephistophiles, the printer's devil! Nevertheless, it was not till years afterwards, and the lapse of a term equal to an ordinary apprenticeship, that the Imp in question became really my Familiar. In the mean time, I continued to compose occasionally, and, like the literary performances of Mr. Weller senior, my lucubrations were generally committed to paper, not in what is commonly called written hand, but an imitation of print. Such a course hints suspiciously of type and antitype, and a longing eye to the Row; whereas it was adopted simply to make the reading more easy, and thus enable me the more readily to form a judgment of the effect of my little efforts. It is more difficult than may be supposed to decide on the value of a work in MS., and especially when the hand-writing presents only a swell mob of bad characters, that must be severally examined and re-examined to arrive at the merits or demerits of the case. Print settles it, as Coleridge used to say: and, to be candid, I have more than once reversed, or greatly modified, a previous verdict, on seeing a rough proof from the press.

"My mental constitution, however weak my physical one, was proof against that type-us fever which parches most scribblers till they are set up, done up, and maybe cut up, in print and boards. Perhaps I had read and trembled at the melancholy annals of those unfortunates, who, rashly undertaking to write for bread, had poisoned themselves, like Chatterton, for want of it, or choked themselves, like Otway, on obtaining it. Possibly, having learned to think humbly of myself, — there is nothing like early sickness and sorrow for 'taking the conceit' out of one, — my vanity did not presume to think, with certain juvenile Tracticians, that I 'had a call' to hold forth in print for the edification of mankind. Perchance, the very deep reverence my reading had led me to entertain for our bards and sages deterred me from thrusting myself into the fellowship of beings that seemed only a little lower than the angels. However, in spite of that very common excuse for publication, 'the advice of a friend,' who seriously recommended the submitting of my MSS. to a literary authority, with a view to his *imprimatur*, my slight acquaintance with the press was pushed no further."

Hood resided two years at Dundee, when he returned to London, and, manifesting a great talent for drawing, was apprenticed to his

uncle, Mr. Robert Sands, an engraver. He was afterwards with one of the Le Keux in the same pursuit; but, though working in *aqua fortis*, as he tells us, he still played with Castaly, now writing — all monkeys are imitators, and all young authors are monkeys — now writing a Bandit to match the Corsair, and now hatching a Lalla Crow by way of companion to Lalla Rookh. We recur to his own Reminiscences:

"In the mean time, while thus playing with literature, an event was ripening which was to introduce me to authorship in earnest, and make the muse, with whom I had only flirted, my companion for life. . . . . In the beginning of the year 1821 a memorable duel, originating in a pen-and-ink quarrel, took place at Chalk Farm, and terminated in the death of Mr. John Scott, the able editor of the *London Magazine*. The melancholy result excited great interest, in which I fully participated, little dreaming that his catastrophe involved any consequences of importance to myself. But, on the loss of its conductor, the periodical passed into other hands. The new proprietors were my friends; they sent for me, and, after some preliminaries, I was duly installed as a sort of sub-editor of the *London Magazine*.

"It would be affectation to say that engraving was resigned with regret. There is always something mechanical about the art; moreover, it is as unwholesome as wearisome to sit copper-fastened to a board, with a cantle scooped out to accommodate your stomach, if you have one, painfully ruling, ruling, and still ruling lines straight or crooked by the long hundred to the square inch, at the doubly-hazardous risk, which Wordsworth so deprecates, of 'growing double.' So, farewell Woollett! Strange! Bartolozzi! I have said my vanity did not rashly plunge me into authorship; but no sooner was there a legitimate opening than I jumped at it, *à la Grimaldi*, head foremost, and was speedily behind the scenes.

"To judge by my zeal and delight in my new pursuit, the bowl had at last found its natural bias. Not content with taking articles, like candidates for holy orders, — with rejecting articles, like the Belgians, — I dreamt articles, thought articles, wrote articles, which were all inserted by the editor, of course with the concurrence of his deputy. The more irksome parts of authorship, such as the correction of the press, were to me labors of love. I received a revise from Mr. Baldwin's Mr. Parker, as if it had been a proof of his regard;

forgave him all his slips, and really thought that printers' devils were not so black as they are painted. But my top-gallant glory was in 'our contributors'! How I used to look forward to Elia! and backward for Hazlitt, and all round for Edward Herbert, and how I used to *look up* to Allan Cunningham! for at that time the *London* had a goodly list of writers — a rare company. It is now defunct; and perhaps no ex-periodical might so appropriately be apostrophized with the Irish funereal question, 'Arrah, honey, why did you die?' Had not you an editor, and elegant prose writers, and beautiful poets, and broths of boys for criticism and classics, and wits and humorists — Elia, Cary, Procter, Cunningham, Bowring, Barton, Hazlitt, Elton, Hartley Coleridge, Talfourd, Soane, Horace Smith, Reynolds, Poole, Clare, and Thomas Benyon, with a power besides? Had n't you Lions' Heads with Traditional Tales? Had n't you an Opium Eater, and a Dwarf, and a Giant, and a Learned Lamb, and a Green Man? Had n't you a regular Drama, and a Musical Report, and a Report of Agriculture, and an Obituary, and a Price Current, and a current price, of only half-a-crown? Arrah, why did you die? Why, somehow, the contributors fell away, the concern went into other hands — worst of all, a new editor tried to put the belles-lettres in utilitarian envelopes; whereupon the circulation of the *Miscellany*, like that of poor LeFevre, got slower, slower, slower, and slower still — and then stopped forever! It was a sorry scattering of those old Londoners! Some went out of the country; one (Clare) went into it. Lamb retreated to Colebrooke. Mr. Cary presented himself to the British Museum. Reynolds and Barry took to engrossing when they should pen a stanza, and Thomas Benyon gave up literature.

"It is with mingled feelings of pride, pleasure and pain, that I revert to those old times, when the writers I had long known and admired in spirit were present to me in the flesh; when I had the delight of listening to their wit and wisdom from their own lips, of gazing on their faces, and grasping their right hands. Familiar figures rise before me, familiar voices ring in my ears, and, alas! amongst them are shapes that I must never see, sounds that I can never hear, again. Before my departure from England, I was one of the few who saw the grave close over the remains of one whom to know as a friend was to love as a relation. Never did a better soul

go to a better world! Never, perhaps (giving the lie direct to the common imputation of envy, malice and hatred, amongst the brotherhood), never did an author descend — to quote his favorite Sir T. Browne — into 'the land of the mole and the pismire' so hung with golden opinions, and honored and regretted with such sincere eulogies and elegies, by his contemporaries. To HIM, the first of these, my reminiscences, is eminently due, for I lost in him not only a dear and kind friend, but an invaluable critic,—one whom, were such literary adoptions in modern use, I might well name, as Cotton called Walton, my 'father.'

"I was sitting, one morning, beside our editor, busily correcting proofs, when a visitor was announced, whose name, grumbled by a low, ventriloquial voice, like Tom Pipes calling from the hold through the hatchway, did not resound distinctly on my tympanum. However, the door opened, and in came a stranger, a figure remarkable at a glance, with a fine head on a small, spare body, supported by two almost immaterial legs. He was clothed in sables, of a bygone fashion, but there was something wanting, or something present about him, that certified he was neither a divine, nor a physicia nor a schoolmaster; from a certain neatness and sobriety in dress, coupled with his sedate bearing, he might have been taken, t that such a costume would be anomalous, for a *Quaker* in bla He looked still more like (what he really was) a literary mode antique, a new-old author, a living anachronism, contemporary once with Burton the elder and Colman the younger. Meanwhi he advanced with rather a peculiar gait, his walk was plan grade, and, with a cheerful 'How d'ye,' and one of the blande sweetest smiles that ever brightened a manly countenance, held o two fingers to the editor. The two gentlemen in black soon fell in discourse; and, whilst they conferred, the Lavater principle with me set to work upon the interesting specimen thus presented to speculations. It was a striking, intellectual face, full of wiry lin physiognomical quips and cranks, that gave it great charact There was much earnestness about the brows, and a deal of spe tion in the eyes, which were brown and bright, and 'quick in ing;' the nose, a decided one, though of no established order there was a handsome smartness about the mouth. Altogeth was no common face — none of those *willow-pattern* ones, which n

turns out by thousands at her potteries; — but more like a chance specimen of the Chinese ware, one to the set — unique, antique, quaint. No one who had once seen it could pretend not to know it again. It was no face to lend its countenance to any confusion of persons in a Comedy of Errors. You might have sworn to it piecemeal — a separate affidavit for every feature. In short, his face was as original as his figure; his figure, as his character; his character, as his writings; his writings, the most original of the age. After the literary business had been settled, the editor invited his contributor to dinner, adding, 'We shall have a hare —'

'And — and — and — and many friends!'

"The hesitation in the speech, and the readiness of the allusion, were alike characteristic of the individual, whom his familiars will perchance have recognized already as the delightful essayist, the capital critic, the pleasant wit and humorist, the delicate-minded and large-hearted Charles Lamb! He was shy, like myself, with strangers; so that, despite my yearnings, our first meeting scarcely amounted to an introduction. We were both at dinner, amongst the hare's many friends; but our acquaintance got no further, in spite of a desperate attempt on my part to attract his notice. His complaint of the Decay of Beggars presented another chance; I wrote on coarse paper, and in ragged English, a letter of thanks to him, as if from one of his mendicant clients, but it produced no effect. I had given up all hope, when, one night, sitting sick and sad in my bed-room, racked with the rheumatism, the door was suddenly opened, the well-known quaint figure in black walked in without any formality, and, with a cheerful 'Well, boy, how are you?' and the bland, sweet smile, extended the two fingers. They were eagerly clutched, of course, and from that hour we were firm friends."

In 1826 Hood made a collection of his contributions to the *London Magazine*, which, with some other pieces, was issued under the title of *Whims and Oddities*. His first book had been published anonymously. It was styled *Odes and Addresses to Great People*, and was written in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Mr. J. H. Reynolds. This work had introduced Hood to the public as a humorist of no common power; a reputation which had been increased by his productions in the *Magazine* — a journal of which the *Westminster Review*

said, with great truth, that it was during its short life cleverly supported by a knot of men whom a too ardent love of the ancient and quaint and homely in literature, hurried into sundry faults of taste, which the sectarian influence of coterie intercourse confirmed into mannerism.

Hood's National Tales appeared in 1827, and was followed by a volume containing The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies, Hero and Leander, Lycus the Centaur, and other poems. In 1829 he commenced the Comic Annual, which was continued for nine years. For one year he edited *The Gem*, in which The Dream of Eugene Aram first appeared; afterwards, issued in a separate *brochure*, with designs by W. Harvey. In 1834 he published *Tylney Hall*, a novel with which we remember to have been very much entertained, and which, we think, never enjoyed the favor to which it was entitled by its merits. In 1836 he published a new edition of his Whims and Oddities in Prose and Verse; and in 1838 a selection of his contributions to the Comic Annual, with new matter, in a series of monthly numbers, under the title of Hood's Own. Ill health now compelled him to go to the continent to recruit; and while in Belgium he published his pleasant little volume, Up the Rhine. During his absence an article on his works appeared in the *Westminster Review*, from which we extract the following description of Hood as he appeared in social life:

"We began by stating our conviction that few writers were so imperfectly understood as he of the 'Comic Annual' is; few, we may add, have been more sparingly known in the world of society. Hood has never sought the tinsel honors of Lionship. A shape of slight figure, with pale and pensive countenance, may, indeed, have flitted through society occasionally, without causing any remark; none of the Lady Worrymores or Capel Loffts, who make themselves ridiculous, and their literary *protegés* disrespectable, by their senseless ecstasies, — even dreaming that that slight figure was moving to and fro to gather simples of humor and folly and absurdity, but not in the spirit of a Sycorax, — that the rarest conceit could twinkle through the spectacles which give a decent gravity to those eyes, or that the most luxuriant whimsies and the most irresistible repartees could drop, rich as oil, if not always sweet as honey, from the corners of that impassive-looking mouth. But we know better; and, as the

sea divides him from us, may say as much without any fear of our friend interposing to prevent us. We have sat by his side through the 'small hours,' listening to tales of ghosts, remembered, improved or improvised, — such as night-watchers in the nineteenth century are rarely permitted to enjoy. We have heard him — apart from the listening circle — accompany the long-winded tale of a traveller with such a running fire of notes and comments *aside* as the brethren of the Row would give gold to gather and print. We have watched him so provoke the component members of a social rubber in that moment of intense interest when the game hung on a card, that odd tricks have been forgotten, trumps wasted, and all four hands thrown down, in an universal paroxysm. We have seen his Yorick spirit sending forth its sparkling bubbles, in despite of trial and vicissitude; — for may we not allude to these, when in his preface to his last new undertaking our friend has himself pointed thereat? His education as an engraver has given him an eye of singular keenness, — his genius a fancy ever ready, and a wit rarely blunt, rarely indebted to others for its weapon; and these are as much manifested in his daily intercourse with his friends as in his more ceremonious commerce with the public. There is not a page in all his works more thoroughly humorous than the account we once heard him deliver of a hurried labor at the 'Comic Annual,' when, at the eleventh hour, like Mozart over the overture to *Don Giovanni*, he fell asleep, and continued (he declares) to dictate, for some good ten minutes, ere his amanuensis, who had been plying the pen for half an hour, herself scarcely less somnolent, discerned the least change in his diction, the least abatement of his fluency. There is no dilemma recounted by Mrs. Twigg, or Mrs. Jones, half so diverting as those with details of which his familiar letters from the continent are filled. But with these the world will perhaps one day be edified; and it would be unfair, by attempting them in feebler phrase, to forestall the new 'Pilgrim of the Rhine.'"

Mrs. S. C. Hall's reminiscences of the poet relate to about the same period of his life:

"I remember the first time I met him was at one of the pleasant *soirées* of the painter Martin; for a moment I turned away — as many have done — disappointed, for the countenance, in repose, was of melancholy rather than of mirth; there was something calm, even

to solemnity, in the upper portion of the face, which, in public, was seldom relieved by the eloquent play of the mouth, or the occasional sparkle of the observant eye; and it was a general remark among his acquaintances, that he was too quiet for 'the world.' There are many wit-watchers to be found in society, who think there is nothing in a man, unless, like a sounding-board, he make a great noise at a small touch; who consider themselves aggrieved, unless an 'author' open at once like a book, and speak as he writes; this vulgar notion, like others of the same stamp, creeps into good society, or what is so considered, and I have seen both Hook and Hood 'set,' as a pointer sets a partridge, by persons who glitter in evanescent light simply by repeating what such men have said. Mr. Hook, perhaps, liked this celebrity, — this sitting and staring, this lion-hunt, — so different from the heart-worship paid to veritable greatness. Mr. Hood did not; he was too sensitive, too refined, to endure it; the dislike to being pointed at as the 'man who was funny' kept him out of a crowd, where there were always numbers who really honored his genius, and loved him for his gentle and domestic virtues. It was only among his friends that his playful fancy flourished, or that he yielded to its influence; although, strictly speaking, 'social' in all his feelings, he never sought to stimulate his wit by the false poison of draughts of wine; nor was he ever more cheerful than when at his own fireside he enjoyed the companionship of his dear and devoted wife. He was playful as a child; and his imagination, pure as bright, frolicked with nature, whom he loved too well ever to outrage or insult by slight or misrepresentation. And yet he was city born, and city bred, — born in the unpoetic district of 'the Poultry,' — though born, as it were, to letters, for his father was a bookseller."

On the return of Hood to England, he became editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, and, on retiring from it in 1843, he published the best of his writings in prose and verse in that journal, with some additions, with the title of "Whimsicalities." In 1844 he started *Hood's Magazine*, his last periodical, and continued to contribute to its pages until within a month before his death. In his later days he was an occasional contributor to *Punch*, where his celebrated *Song of the Shirt* made its first appearance.

Hood died on the third of May, 1845, leaving a widow and two children He died a poor man. He had no money-making faculty

He could delight the world with his genius, but he did not make a good commercial use of it. With all his talents and fame, he did not manage to coin them into gold. Soon after his death a subscription was commenced for the benefit of his family. The project was communicated to the public in a single paragraph, which will be read with melancholy interest:

"THE LATE THOMAS HOOD. — This distinguished writer, who has, for upwards of twenty years, entertained the public with a constant succession of comic and humoristic works, *in the whole range of which not a single line of immoral tendency, or calculated to pain an individual, can be pointed out*, whose poems and serious writings rank among the noblest modern contributions of our national literature, and whose pen was ever the ready and efficient advocate of the unfortunate and the oppressed (as recently, for instance, in the admirable 'Song of the Shirt,' which gave so remarkable an impulse to the movement on behalf of the distressed needlewomen), has left, by his death, a widow and two children in straitened and precarious circumstances, with no other means of subsistence than a small pension, terminable on the failure of the widow's life, barely sufficient to supply a family of three with common necessaries, and totally inadequate for the education and advancement of the orphan children. Even this scanty resource has been, of necessity, forestalled to a considerable extent during the last five months, in order to meet the heavy sick-room and funeral expenses. Under these circumstances, a subscription for the family has been set on foot. The admirers of Thomas Hood throughout the country will, it is hoped, take this opportunity of publicly testifying their recognition of his genius and their sense of his personal worth."

Of his latter days an affecting account was given in the *Literary Gazette*, shortly after his death:

"Thomas Hood died on Saturday morning. A spirit of true philanthropy has departed from its earthly tenement; the light of a curious and peculiar wit has been extinguished; the feeling and pathos of a natural poet have descended into the grave; and left those who knew, admired, and loved these qualities, to feel and de-

plore the loss of him in whom they were so preëminently united. Yet we can hardly say that we lament his death. Poor Hood! his sportive humor, like the rays from a crackling fire in a dilapidated building, had long played among the fractures of a ruined constitution, and flashed upon the world through the flaws and rents of a shattered wreck. Yet, infirm as was the fabric, the equal mind was never disturbed to the last. He contemplated the approach of death with a composed philosophy, and a resigned soul. It had no terrors for him. A short while ago we sat for hours by his bed-side in general and cheerful conversation, as when in social and healthful intercourse. Then he spoke of the certain and unavoidable event about to take place with perfect unreserve, unruffled calmness; and the lesson and example *how to die* was never given in a more impressive and consolatory manner than by Thomas Hood. His bodily sufferings had made no change in his mental character. He was the same as in his publications, — at times lively and jocular, at times serious and affecting; and upon the one great subject of a death-bed hope, he declared himself, as throughout life, opposed to canters and hypocrites, — a class he had always detested and written against; while he set the highest price upon sincere Christianity, whose works of charity and mercy bore witness to the integrity and purity of the faith professed. 'Our common friend,' he said, 'Mrs. E——, I love; for she is truly *religious*, and not a *pious*, woman.' He seemed anxious that his sentiments on the momentous question should not be misrepresented; and that his animosity against the pretended should not be misconstrued into a want of just estimation for the real.

"Another subject upon which he dwelt with much earnestness and gratitude, was the grant of a pension of one hundred pounds a year to his wife. 'There is, after all,' he observed, 'much of good to counterbalance the bad in this world. I have now a better opinion of it than I once had, when pressed by wrongs and injuries.' Two autograph letters from Sir Robert Peel, relating to this pension, gave him intense gratification, and were indeed most honorable to the heart of the writer, whose warmth in the expression of personal solicitude for himself and his family, and of admiration for his productions (with which Sir Robert seemed to be well acquainted), we firmly believe imparted more delight to the dying man than even the prospect that those so dear to him would not be left destitute. In his

answer to the minister's first communication, he had alluded to the tendency of his writings ever being on the side of humanity and order, and not of the modern school, to separate society into two classes, the rich and poor, and to inflame hatred on the one side, and fear on the other. This avowal appeared, from the reply which acknowledged its truth, to have been very acceptable to the premier, from whom the gift had emanated."

On the 18th July, 1854, a monument was raised to the memory of Hood; and in the sketch of the proceedings on this occasion, and the speech of Mr. Monckton Milnes, which we copy from the *London Times*, we find a fit conclusion to this brief account of his life. Mr. Milnes observed:

"I have been asked to come here to-day to say a few words before we open to your view the monument which has been erected to the memory of Hood. It is now some years since we laid our friend below us in this pleasant place, where he rests after a long illness — after a life of noble struggle with much adversity, and of nothing but good to his fellow-men. It is now thought advisable that a few words should be said before that ceremony takes place. It is rather a habit of our neighbors the French than of ourselves, to make eulogistic orations at the tombs of our friends. I do not think the habit in general is pleasing to our taste; but there are reasons why, on the present occasion, it may not be unbecoming. At the same time, it is very difficult to perform this duty, because we must feel that, if ever there was a character of simplicity and humility, it was that of the late Mr. Thomas Hood; and it would not become us, on the present occasion, to indulge in eulogies which, if he were here himself, would be distasteful to him; for he was a man who ever retired from the crowd, and who loved, as he has said in his own classical and beautiful language:

'To kneel remote upon the simple sod,
And sue, *in formâ pauperis*, to God.'

Our German friends call a cemetery of this kind 'God's field,' and we must not desecrate it by vain and pompous eulogies over a fellow-mortal. All we can do is to commit him, with all his errors, to the mercy of God, and at the same time to keep his memory dear and his fame bright among us. This is the purpose of the friends of Mr. Thomas Hood who have raised this structure. Some of them were

familiar with him from his youth — the eyes of others never lit up his person. It would be invidious to single out any of these friends of the poet; but I may mention the name of one lady who is well known to us all, Miss Eliza Cook, to whose exertions, in all quarters of society, the erection of this monument is very much owing. Some, too, have contributed to it who did not appreciate him during his lifetime; — to them may be applicable his beautiful lines:

'Farewell! we did not know thy worth;
But thou art gone, and now 't is prized.
So angels walked unknown on earth,
But when they flew were recognized.'

"He was a poet — a poet in the true sense of the word; but at the same time I by no means think that his poetical powers were of so great and remarkable a character that his reputation would have become such as it is if it had been confined to his poetical works alone. By his poetical works I mean those developments of pure imagination, which are more interesting to literary men than they can be to the world in general. In all these works we recognize not only the lyrical facilities which enable many a youth to throw out good poetry, but the refined taste and cultivated mind of mature years. But his fame — that for which he is chiefly known to us — belongs to him as an English humorist; and, in using that word, I use no word inapplicable to the occasion or unworthy of his fame. It is the boast of our literature, as distinguished from that of all other nations, that from the earliest times of its history we find humoristic writers who delighted the age in which they lived and those which succeeded them. In that category we may place Shakspeare himself, and we may draw, downwards, a long genealogical list of humorists, ending with the names of Charles Lamb, Sydney Smith, and Thomas Hood. I do not know whether my opinions in this matter may be peculiar; but I have often thought that if I were to pray to Heaven for a gift to be given to any person in whom moral and intellectual welfare I was especially interested, it would be that he might have the gift of humor. The gift of humor is, as it were, the balance of all the faculties. It enables a man to see the strong contrasts of life around him; it prevents him being too much devoted to his own knowledge, and too proud of his own imagin-

tion, and it also disposes him to submit, with a wise and pious patience, to the vicissitudes of his daily existence. It is thus that humorists, such as Hood has been, and as Dickens is now, are great benefactors of our species, not only on account of the amusement which they give us, but because they are great moral teachers. The humorous writings of Mr. Thomas Hood have instructed you many years, and will instruct your children after you. I should mention, however, that this combination of poetry and humor does not produce, in all persons, the same blessed effects that it has produced here. In some cases it has degenerated into impatient satire and fierce revolt against the better feelings of humanity. In such a mind as that of Swift, it produced these evil effects; but in such a mind as Hood's, it produced directly the contrary: it generated a noble and generous sympathy with the wants and desires of his fellow-creatures; and it is for this combination of poetical genius and humor and earnest philanthropy, that his name has grown up to become, as it were, a proverb for great wit united with deep and solemn sympathies. We recognize, ladies and gentlemen, these rare merits of Mr. Thomas Hood in the productions of his mature life, such as 'The Bridge of Sighs,' and 'The Song of the Shirt,' — verses which appear occasionally, and only occasionally, in literature, and which seem like products of the acme of the human mind — such products as the prison-song of Lovelace, the elegy of Gray, the sea-songs of Campbell, 'The Burial of Sir John Moore,' and the 'May Queen' of Alfred Tennyson — poems which, though they cost their authors much less trouble than many of their less successful works, are, nevertheless, the anchors (so to speak) of their world-wide fame. These beautiful poems of Mr. Thomas Hood have had a deep moral effect on different classes of society. If there are among those poems, and others of Mr. Thomas Hood, some expressions of stern indignation — if there are some passages which may seem almost exceptions to the general amiability of his character — it is that he wished to enforce the moral, that

> 'Evil is wrought by want of thought
> As well as want of heart.'

I do not think, therefore, that there was any levity in his character because he was an humorist. I do not think, because you find in his

works that with his rich wit and his great possessions of language he delighted to play with words as if, almost, they were fireworks, there was a want of gravity or seriousness in his composition. In a poem of his which is a perfect *repertorium* of wit and spirit, he seems conscious of this himself, for he writes to the effect that —

> 'However critics may take offence,
> A double meaning gives double sense.'

And there are, no doubt, certain subtile faculties about us which enable us to find such great pleasure in the combination of this agility of diction with seriousness of purpose. Ladies and gentlemen who have raised this monument, I was informed by a friend of mine, and a dear friend of his, who remained with him to the last — Mr. Ward — that Mr. Thomas Hood was in very great disease and suffering, that he was laboring under some pecuniary difficulties — that his mind was not easy on those points, and that it would be a great relief to him to obtain some assistance, if he could do so by any honorable means, for he was determined to employ no other. I went on that occasion to Sir R. Peel, from whom I met with the most perfect sympathy as regarded the object I had in view; and it was to me a most interesting fact that that great man, governing the destinies of this mighty nation, and engaged as he was in the gravest pursuits, could nevertheless be drawn, by the force of human sympathy, to take a deep interest in this simple man of letters. What was done on that occasion was sufficient for the purpose. I will ask you, therefore, in looking upon this bust, to regard it as a memorial not only of the interest of his friends, but as a memorial of national interest for a national name. It consists, as you perceive, of a plain bust upon a pedestal. I have always thought that a man's bust is the best monument which could be raised to him; it is that which is most calculated to show people who come after him what he really was, and it is less dumb and less vacant than the monuments which we see mostly around us. It is perfectly true that, generally speaking, we find that busts represent the dead when we could wish they represented the living; it is perfectly true, also, that in our every-day walk among living busts we see men of genius, whom we do not recognize, and whose services and virtues we do not honor; and, after all, this may, perhaps, be but a poor acknowledgment of the

worth of the poet and humorist; but still here it is, and we have raised it, and I trust all will feel that in so doing we have not done honor to him, but to ourselves. I remember that at the time of his fatal illness I was very much haunted with the recollection of some lines of his, which, I dare say, some of you remember. They are contained in a little poem called *The Death-bed* —

'We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

'So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

'Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied —
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

'For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed — she had
Another morn than ours.'

Thomas Hood has now another morn than ours — may that morn have brightened into perfect day! May his spirit look down with gratification upon us who have raised this modest homage to him — may he look down with pleasure on those he has left behind him, and who inherit his honor and his name — and may we all bear home with us the consoling reflection, that the fame of which a wise and honest man should be ambitious is not that of acquiring wealth, power, or even earning clamorous applause, but the attaining of such homage as we are now paying to one who among us was a brother and a friend — one who may make us at the same time thankful to the age in which it has pleased Providence to cast our lot, and grateful to the race and country of which we are common citizens and men."

The monument consists of a large bronze bust of Hood, elevated on a handsome pedestal of polished red granite. On a slab beneath

the bust is his own self-inscribed epitaph — "He sang 'The Song of the Shirt;'" and upon the projecting front of the pedestal the inscription is carved — "In memory of Thomas Hood, born 23d of May, 1798; died 3d of May, 1845; erected by public subscription A.D. 1854." On the sides of the pedestal are medallions illustrating "The Bridge of Sighs" and "The Dream of Eugene Aram." The monument is the work of Mr. Matthew Noble. It is simple in design, and correctly executed, and looks well in the midst of the medley of monuments with which Kensal-green is filling. But, independently of any consideration of that kind, this must ever be one of the chief treasures of the place.

THE PLEA

OF

THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

My dear Friend: I thank my literary fortune that I am not reduced, like many better wits, to barter dedications, for the hope or promise of patronage, with some nominally great man; but that where true affection points, and honest respect, I am free to gratify my head and heart by a sincere inscription. An intimacy and dearness worthy of a much earlier date than our acquaintance can refer to, direct me at once to your name; and with this acknowledgment of your ever kind feeling towards me, I desire to record a respect and admiration for you as a writer, which no one acquainted with our literature, save Elia himself, will think disproportionate or misplaced. If I had not these better reasons to govern me, I should be guided to the same selection by your intense yet critical relish for the works of our great Dramatist, and for that favorite play in particular which has furnished the subject of my verses.

It is my design, in the following Poem, to celebrate by an allegory that immortality which Shakspeare has conferred on the Fairy mythology by his Midsummer Night's Dream. But for him, those pretty children of our childhood would leave barely their names to our maturer years; they belong, as the mites upon the plum, to the bloom of fancy, a thing generally too frail and beautiful to withstand the rude handling of Time: but the Poet has made this most perishable part of the mind's creation equal to the most enduring; he has so intertwined the Elfins with human sympathies, and linked them by so many delightful associations with the productions of nature, that they are as real to the mind's eye as their green magical circles to the outer sense.

It would have been a pity for such a race to go extinct, even though they were but as the butterflies that hover about the leaves and blossoms of the visible world.

I am, my dear friend,

Yours, most truly,

T. Hood.

THE

PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES.

'T WAS in that mellow season of the year
When the hot Sun singes the yellow leaves
Till they be gold, and with a broader sphere
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves;
When more abundantly the spider weaves,
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier clime;
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,
Touched with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their prime.

So that, wherever I addressed my way,
I seemed to track the melancholy feet
Of him that is the Father of Decay,
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet;—
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat
To some unwasted regions of my brain,
Charmed with the light of summer and the heat,
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,
And sprout fresh flowers in mine own domain.

It was a shady and sequestered scene,
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,
Planted with his own laurels ever green,
And roses that for endless summer blow;

And there were fountain springs to overflow
Their marble basins; and cool green arcades
Of tall o'crarching sycamores, to throw
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades;
With timid coneys cropping the green blades.

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish,
Argent and gold; and some of Tyrian skin,
Some crimson-barred; — and ever at a wish
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom;
Whilst others with fresh hues rowed forth to win
My changeable regard,— for so we doom
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

And there were many birds of many dyes,
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,
Besides some vocalists, without a name,
That oft on fairy errands come and go,
With accents magical; — and all were tame,
And peckéd at my hand where'er I came.

And for my sylvan company, in lieu
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,
Sate Queen Titania with her pretty crew,
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears;
For she was gracious to my childish years,
And made me free of her enchanted round;
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound

"Ah, me," she cries, "was ever moonlight seen
So clear and tender for our midnight trips?
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene
My lieges all!" — Away the goblin skips
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,
Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,
Like a frayed bird in the gray owlet's beak.

And, lo! upon my fixed delighted ken
Appeared the loyal Fays. Some by degrees
Crept from the primrose-buds that opened then,
And some from bell-shaped blossoms like the bees
Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,
Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass;
Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
Dropped, like shed blossoms, silent to the grass.
Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain;
And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,
Fresh dripping from a cloud — some bloomy rain,
Then circling the bright Moon. had washed her car,
And still bedewed it with a various stain:
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,
Was absent, whether some distempered spleen
Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been

Sometimes obnoxious), kept him from his queen,
And made her now peruse the starry skies
Prophetical with such an absent mien;
Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,
And oft the Moon was incensed with her sighs —

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon
Their hushing dances languished to a stand,
Like midnight leaves when, as the Zephyrs swoon,
All on their drooping stems they sink unfanned,—
So into silence drooped the fairy band,
To see their empress dear so pale and still,
Crowding her softly round on either hand,
As pale as frosty snow-drops, and as chill,
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

"Alas!" quoth she, "ye know our fairy lives
Are leased upon the fickle faith of men;
Not measured out against fate's mortal knives,
Like human gossamers, we perish when
We fade, and are forgot in worldly ken,—
Though poesy has thus prolonged our date,
Thanks be to the sweet Bard's auspicious pen
That rescued us so long! — howbeit of late
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

"And this dull day my melancholy sleep
Hath been so thronged with images of woe,
That even now I cannot choose but weep
To think this was some sad prophetic show
Of future horror to befall us so,—
Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—
Yea, our poor empire's fall and overthrow,—
For this was my long vision's dreadful stress
And when I waked my trouble was not less.

" Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,
Such leaden weight dragged these Icarian wings,
My faithless wand was wavering and weak,
And slimy toads had trespassed in our rings —
The birds refused to sing for me — all things
Disowned their old allegiance to our spells;
The rude bees pricked me with their rebel stings;
And, when I passed, the valley-lily's bells
Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.

" And ever on the faint and flagging air
A doleful spirit with a dreary note
Cried in my fearful ear, ' Prepare ! prepare ! '
Which soon I knew came from a raven's throat,
Perched on a cypress-bough not far remote,—
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,
That alway cometh with his soot-black coat
To make hearts dreary : — for he is a blot
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot ! —

" Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,
With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit
Startled me all aheap ! — and soon I saw
The horridest shape that ever raised my awe,—
A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,
With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,
And this was sure the deadliest of them all !

" Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown;
So from his barren poll one hoary lock
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,

Well-nigh to where his frosty brows did frown
Like jagged icicles at cottage eaves;
And for his coronal he wore some brown
And bristled ears gathered from Ceres' sheaves,
Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.

"And, lo! upon a mast reared far aloft,
He bore a very bright and crescent blade,
The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,
In meditative spite, that, sore dismayed,
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade;
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by:
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made
The trembling birds betake them to the sky,
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.

"And ever, as he sighed, his foggy breath
Blurred out the landscape like a flight of smoke:
Thence knew I this was either dreary Death
Or Time, who leads all creatures to his stroke.
Ah, wretched me!" — Here, even as she spoke,
The melancholy Shape came gliding in,
And leaned his back against an antique oak,
Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin,
They scarce were seen against the Dryad's skin.

Then what a fear seized all the little rout!
Look how a flock of panicked sheep will stare —
And huddle close — and start — and wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—
So did that sudden Apparition scare
All close aheap those small affrighted things;
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings;
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings?

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear
And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,
Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges dear:
"Alas!" quoth she, "is there no nodding wheat
Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet,—
Or withered leaves to ravish from the tree,—
Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat?
Think but what vaunting monuments there be
Builded in spite and mockery of thee.

"O, fret away the fabric walls of Fame,
And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust:
Make tombs inscriptionless — raze each high name,
And waste old armors of renown with rust:
Do all of this, and thy revenge is just:
Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,
And check Ambition's overweening lust,
That dares exterminating war with Time,—
But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

"Frail, feeble sprites! — the children of a dream!
Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,
Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,
Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then; —
So do we flutter in the glance of youth
And fervid fancy,— and so perish when
The eye of faith grows aged; — in sad truth,
Feeling thy sway, O Time! though not thy tooth!

"Where be those old divinities forlorn,
That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?
Alas! their memories are dimmed and torn,
Like the remainder tatters of a dream:

So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem; —
For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,
That holds the wastes of every human scheme.
O, spare us then,— and these our pretty elves,
We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves!"

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name
Those old Olympians, scattered by the whirl
Of fortune's giddy wheel and brought to shame,
Methought a scornful and malignant curl
Showed on the lips of that malicious churl,
To think what noble havocs he had made:
So that I feared he all at once would hurl
The harmless fairies into endless shade,—
Howbeit he stopped a while to whet his blade.

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail
Rise up in concert from their mingled dread;
Pity it was to see them, all so pale,
Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed; —
But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,
That hung between two branches of a brier,
And 'gan to swing and gambol heels o'er head,
Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,
For him no present grief could long inspire.

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,
Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,
Bedews a pathway from her throne; — and stops
Before the foot of her arch enemy,
And with her little arms enfolds his knee,
That shows more gristly from that fair embrace;
But she will ne'er depart. "Alas!" quoth she
"My painful fingers I will here enlace
Till I have gained your pity for our race.

"What have we ever done to earn this grudge,
And hate — (if not too humble for thy hating?) —
Look o'er our labors and our lives, and judge
If there be any ills of our creating;
For we are very kindly creatures, dating
With nature's charities still sweet and bland: —
O, think this murder worthy of debating!" —
Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,
To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,
Clad all in white like any chorister,
Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings,
That made soft music at each little stir,
But something louder than a bee's demur
Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,
And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—
And, O, his voice was sweet, touched with the gloom
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom!

Quoth he, "We make all melodies our care,
That no false discords may offend the Sun,
Music's great master — tuning everywhere
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one
Duly to place and season, so that none
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn
The shrill sweet lark; and when the day is done,
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.

"We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,
That make a chorus with their single note;
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place,
That duly they may get their tunes by rote;

And oft, like echoes, answering remote,
We hide in thickets from the feathered throng,
And strain in rivalship each throbbing throat,
Singing in shrill responses all day long,
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

"Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love
The raining music from a morning cloud,
When vanished larks are carolling above,
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud; —
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell
Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel."

Then Saturn thus: "Sweet is the merry lark,
That carols in man's ear so clear and strong;
And youth must love to listen in the dark
That tuneful elegy of Tereus' wrong;
But I have heard that ancient strain too long,
For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,
And I grow weary for some newer song;
For wherefore had I wings, unless to range
Through all things mutable from change to change

"But wouldst thou hear the melodies of Time,
Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll
Over hushed cities, and the midnight chime
Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll
Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,
Saying, Time shall be final of all things,
Whose late, last voice must elegize the whole,—
O, then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,
And make the wide air tremble while it rings!"

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,
Saying, "We be the handmaids of the Spring,
In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,
Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.
We tend upon buds' birth and blossoming,
And count the leafy tributes that they owe —
As, so much to the earth — so much to fling
In showers to the brook — so much to go
In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.

"The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green;
Pansies, and those veiled nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen;
And golden daffodils, plucked for May's Queen;
And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath;
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
Whose tuneful voice, turned fragrance in his breath,
Kissed by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

"The widowed primrose weeping to the moon,
And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright
A cool libation hoarded for the noon
Is kept — and she that purifies the light,
The virgin lily, faithful to her white,
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame;
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's spright,
Our every godchild, by whatever name —
Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the same!"

Then that old Mower stamped his heel, and struck
His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,
Saying, "Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck
With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crowned

With flowery chaplets, save when they are found
Withered? — Whenever have I plucked a rose,
Except to scatter its vain leaves around?
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,
And bring decay on every flower that blows.

"Or when am I so wroth as when I view
The wanton pride of Summer; — how she decks
The birth-day world with blossoms ever new,
As if Time had not lived, and heaped great wrecks
Of years on years? — O, then I bravely vex
And catch the gay Months in their gaudy plight,
And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,
And raise great trophies to my ancient might!"

Then saith another, "We are kindly things,
And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—
Witness these hearts embroidered on our wings,
To show our constant patronage of love: —
We sit at even, in sweet bowers above
Lovers, and shake rich odors on the air,
To mingle with their sighs; and still remove
The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

"And we are near the mother when she sits
Beside her infant in its wicker bed;
And we are in the fairy scene that flits
Across its tender brain: sweet dreams we shed,
And whilst the tender little soul is fled
Away, to sport with our young elves, the while
We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,
So that their careful parents they beguile.

O, then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow
At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise
Crushed the dear curl on a regardful brow
That did not frown thee from thy honey prize —
If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within
To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,
Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,
For love's dear sake, let us thy pity win!"

Then Saturn fiercely thus: "What joy have I
In tender babes, that have devoured mine own,
Whenever to the light I heard them cry,
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone?
Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,
In monstrous dints of my enormous tooth;
And,— but the peopled world is too full grown
For hunger's edge,— I would consume all youth
At one great meal, without delay or ruth!

"For I am well-nigh crazed and wild to hear
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,
Saying, 'We shall not die nor disappear,
But in these other selves, ourselves succeed,
Even as ripe flowers pass into their seed
Only to be renewed from prime to prime,'
All of which boastings I am forced to read,
Besides a thousand challenges to Time
Which bragging lovers have compiled in rhyme.

"Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o' nights,
There will I steal, and with my hurried hand
Startle them suddenly from their delights
Before their next encounter hath been planned,

Ravishing hours in little minutes spanned;
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,
Meanwhile their many tears incrust my dart,
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart."

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in green,
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly stood
Each at his proper ease, as they had been
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—
So came this chief right frankly, and made good
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn's cup:

"We be small foresters and gay, who tend
On trees and all their furniture of green,
Training the young boughs airily to bend,
And show blue snatches of the sky between;
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen
Birds' crafty dwellings as may hide them best,
But most the timid blackbird's — she, that seen,
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.

"We bend each tree in proper attitude,
And founting willows train in silvery falls;
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,
And verdant aisles leading to Dryads' halls,
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls; —
We shape all plumy trees against the sky,
And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,
Men say, the tapping woodpecker is nigh.

"Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow cell,
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees' rind,
That haply some lone musing wight may spell
Dainty Aminta,— gentle Rosalind,—
Or chastest Laura,— sweetly called to mind
In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down; —
And sometimes we enrich gray stems, with twined
And vagrant ivy,— or rich moss, whose brown
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.

"And, lastly, for mirth's sake and Christmas cheer,
We bear the seedling berries, for increase,
To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,
Careful that mistletoe may never cease; —
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace
Of sombre forests, or to see light break
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release
Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad's sake."

Then Saturn, with a frown: "Go forth, and fell
Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell
To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky
Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy
The next green generation of the tree;
But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er they fly,—
Which in the bleak air I would rather see,
Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be.

"For I dislike all prime, and verdant pets,
Ivy except, that on the aged wall
Preys with its worm-like roots, and daily frets
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,

King-like, worn down by its own coronal: —
Neither in forest haunts love I to won,
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves on,
Or bare — like Nature in her skeleton.

"For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,
Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs;
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes; —
But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,
And must be courted with the gauds of spring;
Whilst Youth leans godlike on her lap, and cries,
What shall we always do, but love and sing? —
And Time is reckoned a discarded thing."

Here in my dream it made me fret to see
How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while
Had blithely jested with calamity,
With mistimed mirth mocking the doleful style
Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile
To see him so reflect their grief aside,
Turning their solemn looks to half a smile —
Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide; —
But soon a novel advocate I spied.

Quoth he, "We teach all natures to fulfil
Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—
The bee's sweet alchemy,— the spider's skill,—
The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—
And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—
The lapwing's cunning to preserve her nest,—
But most that lesser pelican, the sweet
And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,
Its tender pity of poor babes distrest.

"Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins
Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves
From our example; so the spider spins,
And eke the silk-worm, patterned by ourselves:
Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves
Of early bees, and busy toils commence,
Watched of wise men, that know not we are elves,
But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense
And praise our human-like intelligence.

"Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,
And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,
What time the leaves are scattered by the gale,
Mindful of that old forest burying;—
As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,
For whom our craft most curiously contrives,
If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,
To take his honey-bag,— spare us our lives,
And we will pay the ransom in full hives."

"Now by my glass," quoth Time, "ye do offend
In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,
And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,
But they lay up for need a timely store,
And travail with the seasons evermore;
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath passed away,
And none but I can tell what hide he wore;
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,
In riddling wonder his great bones survey."

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun
Hath all embroidered with its crooked gold
It was so quaintly wrought and overrun

With spangled traceries,— most meet for one
That was a warden of the pearly streams; —
And as he stept out of the shadows dun,
His jewels sparkled in the pale moon's gleams,
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

Quoth he, "We bear the gold and silver keys
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below
Course through the veiny earth,— which, when they freeze
Into hard crysolites, we bid to flow,
Creeping like subtle snakes, when, as they go,
We guide their windings to melodious falls,
At whose soft murmurings so sweet and low
Poets have turned their smoothest madrigals,
To sing to ladies in their banquet-halls.

"And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat
Parches the river god,— whose dusty urn
Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn,
And languid fish, unpoised, grow sick and yearn,—
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,
And little channels dig, wherein we turn
The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

"Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,
With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—
In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—
And all reflections in a streamlet made,
Haply of thy own love, that, disarrayed,
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—
By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,
And winking stars reduplicate at night,
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight."

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks
Moved not the spiteful Shade: — Quoth he, "Your taste
Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks
And slavish rivulets that run to waste
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste
To swell the vast dominion of the sea,
In whose great presence I am held disgraced,
And neighbored with a king that rivals me
In ancient might and hoary majesty.

"Whereas I ruled in chaos, and still keep
The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,
Before the briny fountains of the deep
Brimmed up the hollow cavities of earth;
I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,
Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,
And infant Titans of enormous girth,
Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks
Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.

"Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,
That scared the world? — By this sharp scythe they fell,
And half the sky was curdled with their blood:
So have all primal giants sighed farewell.
No Wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,
Nor pearly Naiads. All their days are done
That strove with Time, untimely, to excel;
Wherefore I razed their progenies, and none
But my great shadow intercepts the sun!"

Then saith the timid Fay, "O, mighty Time!
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans' fall,
For they were stained with many a bloody crime:
Great giants work great wrongs, — but we are small,

For Love goes lowly; — but Oppression 's tall,
And with surpassing strides goes foremost still
Where Love indeed can hardly reach at all;
Like a poor dwarf o'erburthened with good will,
That labors to efface the tracks of ill.

"Man even strives with Man, but we eschew
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor;
Nay, we are gentle as sweet heaven's dew,
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite.
For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,
But only when all love hath taken flight,
And youth's warm gracious heart is hardened quite.

"So are our gentle natures intertwined
With sweet humanities, and closely knit
In kindly sympathy with human kind.
Witness how we befriend, with elfin-wit,
All hopeless maids and lovers, — nor omit
Magical succors unto hearts forlorn: —
We charm man's life, and do not perish it; —
So judge us by the helps we showed this morn
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

'T was nigh sweet Amwell; — for the Queen had tasked
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet basked;
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see,
Planted in moss-grown rushes to the knee,
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim; —
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

"His face was ashy pale, and leaden care
Had sunk the levelled arches of his brow,
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to fare
Over those melancholy springs and slow,
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,
And fell anon into the chilly stream;
Which, as his mimicked image showed below,
Wrinkled his face with many a needless seam,
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.

"And, lo! upon the air we saw him stretch
His passionate arms; and, in a wayward strain,
He 'gan to elegize that fellow-wretch
That with mute gestures answered him again,
Saying, 'Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain
Life's sad weak captive in a prison strong,
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong?—
Thou wearest that mortal livery too long!'

"This, with mere spleenful speeches and some tears,
When he had spent upon the imaged wave,
Speedily I convened my elfin peers
Under the lily-cups, that we might save
This woful mortal from a wilful grave
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,
Seeing he was mere Melancholy's slave,
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,
And straight was tangled in her secret net.

"Therefore, as still he watched the water's flow,
Daintily we transformed, and with bright fins
Came glancing through the gloom; some from below
Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,

Snatching the light upon their purple skins;
Then under the broad leaves made slow retire:
One like a golden galley bravely wins
Its radiant course,— another glows like fire,—
Making that wayward man our pranks admire.

"And so he banished thought, and quite forgot
All contemplation of that wretched face;
And so we wiled him from that lonely spot
Along the river's brink; till, by Heaven's grace,
He met a gentle haunter of the place,
Full of sweet wisdom gathered from the brooks,
Who there discussed his melancholy case
With wholesome texts learned from kind Nature's books
Meanwhile he newly trimmed his lines and hooks."

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now —
"Let me remember how I saved a man,
Whose fatal noose was fastened on a bough,
Intended to abridge his sad life's span;
For haply I was by when he began
His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,
And overheard his melancholy plan,
How he had made a vow to end his days,
And therefore followed him in all his ways,

"Through brake and tangled copse, for much he loathed
All populous haunts, and roamed in forests rude,
To hide himself from man. But I had clothed
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,
Till we were come beside an ancient tree
Late blasted by a storm. Here he renewed
His loud complaints,— choosing that spot to be
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

"It was a wild and melancholy glen,
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,
Pushed through the rotten sod for fear's remark;
A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,
With many blasted oaks moss-grown and gray.

"But here upon this final desperate clause
Suddenly I pronounced so sweet a strain,
Like a panged nightingale it made him pause,
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,
The sad remainder oozing from his brain
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,
Which through his ardent eyes began to drain;—
Meanwhile the deadly fates unclosed their shears:—
So pity me and all my fated peers!"

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hushed:
When with the hoary shape a fresh tongue pleads,
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blushed
To read the record of her own good deeds:—
"It chanced," quoth she, "in seeking through the meads
For honeyed cowslips, sweetest in the morn,
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads,
And Echo answered to the huntsman's horn,
We found a babe left in the swarths forlorn

"A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting,
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring;
And too soon banished from a mother's petting,

To churlish nurture and the wide world's fretting,
For alien pity and unnatural care; —
Alas! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

"His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipped shell;
And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
But quickly rolled themselves to pearls, and fell,
Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
Or haply wandered to the dimpled well,
Which love beside his mouth had sweetly planned,
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

"Pity it was to see those frequent tears
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;
There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
As any mother's heart might leap to prize;
Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
Softened betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild; —
Just touched with thought, and yet not over wise,
They showed the gentle spirit of a child,
Not yet by care or any craft defiled.

"Pity it was to see the ardent sun
Scorching his helpless limbs — it shone so warm;
For kindly shade or shelter he had none,
Nor mother's gentle breast, come fair or storm.
Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform
Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,
All round the infant noisily we swarm,
Haply some passing rustic to advise —
Whilst providential Heaven our care espies

" And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,
Who, wondering at our loud unusual note,
Strays curiously aside, and so doth find
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,
And laps the foundling in his russet coat,
Who thence was nurtured in his kindly cot: —
But how he prospered let proud London quote,
How wise, how rich, and how renowned he got,
And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

" Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,
Whose holds were fraught with costly merchandise,—
Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames,
And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies:
Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,
The mart of merchants from the East and West;
Whose slender summit, pointing to the skies,
Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest —

" The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,
Inspirited with dew to leap and sing: —
So let us also live, eternal King!
Partakers of the green and pleasant earth: —
Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth:
Enough there is of joy's decrease and dearth!

" Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty,
Perished and gone, and hasting to decay; —
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty
Or spite it is to havoc and to slay:

Too many a lovely race, razed quite away,
Hath left large gaps in life and human loving: —
Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, reproving
Thy desolating hand for our removing."

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,
And looking up, I saw the antic Puck
Grappling with Time, who clutched him like a fly,
Victim of his own sport,— the jester's luck!
He, whilst his fellows grieved, poor wight, had stuck
His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,
And now his ear, and now his beard, would pluck;
Whereas the angry churl had snatched him now,
Crying, "Thou impish mischief, who art thou?"

"Alas!" quoth Puck, "a little random elf,
Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,
For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,
But for no other purpose, worth, or need;
And yet withal of a most happy breed;
And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,
My partner dear in many a prankish deed
To make dame Laughter hold her jolly sides,
Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

"'T is we that bob the angler's idle cork,
Till even the patient man breathes half a curse;
We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,
And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,
Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse:
And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,
We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse
But any graver purpose to fulfil,
We have not wit enough, and scarce the will

"We never let the canker melancholy
To gather on our faces like a rust,
But gloss our features with some change of folly,
Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,
But only sorrowing when sorrow must:
We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,
But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust
To frisk upon a wind,— whereas the flood
Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

"Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,
Who gloze her lively universal law,
As if she had not formed our cheerful feature
To be so tickled with the slightest straw!
So let them vex their mumping mouths, and draw
The corners downward, like a watery moon,
And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw –
We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
Or nurse November on the lap of June.

"For ours are winging sprites, like any bird
That shun all stagnant settlements of grief;
And even in our rest our hearts are stirred,
Like insects settled on a dancing leaf:
This is our small philosophy in brief,
Which thus to teach hath set me all agape.
But dost thou relish it? O, hoary chief!
Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my nape,
And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape."

Then Saturn thus: — shaking his crooked blade
O'erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash
In all the fairies' eyes, dismally frayed!
His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash —

Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash —
"Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing!
Whom naught can frighten, sadden, or abash,—
To hope my solemn countenance to wring
To idiot smiles! — but I will prune thy wing!

"Lo! this most awful handle of my scythe
Stood once a May-pole, with a flowery crown,
Which rustics danced around, and maidens blithe,
To wanton pipings; — but I plucked it down,
And robed the May Queen in a church-yard gown,
Turning her buds to rosemary and rue;
And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,
And laid each lusty leaper in the dew; —
So thou shalt fare — and every jovial crew!"

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch
His mortal engine with each grisly hand,
Which frights the elfin progeny so much,
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand
All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,
With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe! —
Meanwhile, some moving argument I planned,
To make the stern Shade merciful,— when, lo!
He drops his fatal scythe without a blow!

For, just at need, a timely Apparition
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt;
Making him change his horrible position,
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,
That dares Time's irresistible affront,
Whose strokes have scarred even the gods of old; —
Whereas this seemed a mortal, at mere hunt
For coneys, lighted by the moonshine cold,
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,
And holds her beauty for a while in gaze,
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap;
And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,
As if in question of this magic chance,
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap;
And then upon old Saturn turns askance,
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance: —

"O, these be Fancy's revellers by night!
Stealthy companions of the downy moth —
Diana's motes, that flit in her pale light,
Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth; —
These be the feasters on night's silver cloth, —
The gnat with shrilly trump is their convener,
Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,
With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,
Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

"These be the pretty genii of the flowers,
Daintily fed with honey and pure dew —
Midsummer's phantoms in her dreaming hours,
King Oberon, and all his merry crew,
The darling puppets of romance's view;
Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves, we call them,
Famous for patronage of lovers true; —
No harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,
So do not thus with crabbed frowns appall them."

O, what a cry was Saturn's then! — it made
The fairies quake. "What care I for their pranks,
However they may lovers choose to aid,
Or dance their roundelays on flowery banks?

Long must they dance before they earn my thanks,—
So step aside, to some far safer spot,
Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,
And leave them in the sun, like weeds, to rot,
And with the next day's sun to be forgot."

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen;
But still the gracious Shade disarmed his aim,
Stepping with brave alacrity between,
And made his sere arm powerless and tame.
His be perpetual glory, for the shame
Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat! —
But I must tell, how here Titania came
With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat
His kindly succor, in sad tones, but sweet.

Saying, "Thou seest a wretched queen before thee
The fading power of a failing land,
Who for her kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,
Now menaced by this tyrant's spoiling hand;
No one but thee can hopefully withstand
That crooked blade, he longeth so to lift.
I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand.
Which only times all ruins by its drift,
Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

"Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,
That hangs upon his bald and barren crown;
And we will sing to see him so rebuffed,
And lend our little mights to pull him down,
And make brave sport of his malicious frown,
For all his boastful mockery o'er men.
For thou wast born, I know, for this renown,
By my most magical and inward ken,
That readeth even at Fate's forestalling pen.

" Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,
And by thy brow's most fair and ample span,
Thought's glorious palace, framed for fancies high,
And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,
I know the signs of an immortal man,—
Nature's chief darling, an illustrious mate,
Destined to foil old Death's oblivious plan,
And shine untarnished by the fogs of Fate,
Time's famous rival till the final date !

" O, shield us, then, from this usurping Time,
And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams ;
And teach thee tunes, to wed unto thy rhyme,
And dance about thee in all midnight gleams,
Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,
Such as no mortal's eye hath ever seen ;
And, for thy love to us in our extremes,
Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,
Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been !

" And we 'll distil thee aromatic dews,
To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flowers :
And flavored syrups in thy drinks infuse,
And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bowers,
And with our games divert thy weariest hours,
With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.
And, this churl dead, there 'll be no hasting hours
To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies : " —
Here she was stopped by Saturn's furious cries.

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,
Saying, " Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop
Thy hollow coffin in some church-yard yew,
Or make the autumnal flowers turn pale and droop ;

Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop
Under fat sheaves,— or blast the piny grove; —
But here thou shalt not harm this pretty group,
Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,
But leased on Nature's loveliness and love.

"'T is these that free the small entangled fly,
Caught in the venomed spider's crafty snare; —
These be the petty surgeons that apply
The healing balsams to the wounded hare,
Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care! —
These be providers for the orphan brood,
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,
Quitting with gaping bill her darlings' food,
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

"'T is these befriend the timid trembling stag,
When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,
He feels his saving speed begin to flag;
For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,
And prompt fresh shifts in his alarumed ears,
So piteously they view all bloody morts;
Or if the gunner, with his arm, appears,
Like noisy pyes and jays, with harsh reports,
They warn the wild fowl of his deadly sports.

"For these are kindly ministers of nature,
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress;
Pretty they be, and very small of stature,—
For mercy still consorts with littleness; —
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,
And mischief grossest in this world of wrong: —
So do these charitable dwarfs redress
The ten-fold ravages of giants strong,
To whom great malice and great might belong.

"Likewise to them are Poets much beholden
For secret favors in the midnight glooms;
Brave Spenser quaffed out of their goblets golden,
And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms,
And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms
Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,
Like humming bees busy about the brooms,—
And glanced this fair queen's witchery full oft,
And in her magic wain soared far aloft.

"Nay, I myself, though mortal, once was nursed
By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,
And in my childish ear glib Mab rehearsed
Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,
Telling me wonders of the moon and earth;
My gramarye at her grave lap I conned,
Where Puck hath been convened to make me mirth;
I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,
And toyed with Oberon's permitted wand.

"With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed me,
And delicate cates after my sunset meal,
And took me by my childish hand, and led me
By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,
Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,
Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes:
And when the West sparkled at Phœbus' wheel,
With fairy euphrasy they purged mine eyes,
To let me see their cities in the skies.

"'T was they first schooled my young imagination
To take its flights like any new-fledged bird,
And showed the span of wingéd meditation
Stretched wider than things grossly seen or heard.

With sweet swift Ariel how I soared and stirred
The fragrant blooms of spiritual bowers!
'T was they endeared what I have still preferred,
Nature's blest attributes and balmy powers,
Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and flowers!

"Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty
Will I regard them in my honoring rhyme,
With love for love, and homages to beauty,
And magic thoughts gathered in night's cool clime,
With studious verse trancing the dragon Time,
Strong as old Merlin's necromantic spells;
So these dear monarchs of the summer's prime
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery cells."

Look how a poisoned man turns livid black,
Drugged with a cup of deadly hellebore,
That sets his horrid features all at rack,—
So seemed these words into the ear to pour
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,
Wherewith his grisly arm he raised once more,
And bade the clustered sinews all engage,
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

Whereas the blade flashed on the dinted ground,
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar
On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound;
But Time was long benumbed, and stood ajar,
And then with baffled rage took flight afar,
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,
Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

Howbeit he vanished in the forest shade,
Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,
And, like Narcissus, to a sound decayed; —
Meanwhile the fays clustered the gracious Bard,
The darling centre of their dear regard:
Besides of sundry dances on the green,
Never was mortal man so brightly starred,
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.
"Nod to him, Elves!" cries the melodious queen.

"Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him,
And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,
And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,
The silk-worm now had spun our dreary shroud; —
But he hath all dispersed death's tearful cloud,
And Time's dread effigy scared quite away:
Bow to him, then, as though to me ye bowed,
And his dear wishes prosper and obey
Wherever love and wit can find a way!

"'Noint him with fairy dews of magic savors,
Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,
Roses and spicy pinks,— and, of all favors,
Plant in his walks the purple violet,
And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,
To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine
And honeysuckles sweet,— nor yet forget
Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,
To vie the thoughts about his brow benign

"Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,
But tell them all how mild he is of heart,
Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near him,
And eke the dappled does, yet never start;

Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,
Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,
Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart; —
But bid the sacred swallow haunt his eaves,
To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

"Or when he goes the nimble squirrel's visitor,
Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,
For, tell him, this is Nature's kind Inquisitor,—
Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience shuts,
For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts,—
Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,
However he may watch their straw-built huts; —
So let him learn the crafts of all small things,
Which he will hint most aptly when he sings."

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand
Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head;
Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,
Wears still the glory which her waving shed,
Such as erst crowned the old Apostle's head;
To show the thoughts there harbored were divine,
And on immortal contemplations fed: —
Goodly it was to see that glory shine
Around a brow so lofty and benign! —

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood
Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,
That had their mortal enemy withstood,
And stayed their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.
Long while this strife engaged the pretty band;
But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,
Challenged the dawn creeping o'er eastern land,
And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,
Which sounds the knell of every elfish charm.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise
From plashy mead and undiscovered stream,
Earth's morning incense to the early skies,
Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.
Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme —
A shapeless shade, that fancy disavowed,
And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.
Then flew Titania,— and her little crowd,
Like flocking linnets, vanished in a cloud.

HERO AND LEANDER.

TO S. T. COLERIDGE.

It is not with a hope my feeble praise
Can add one moment's honor to thy own,
That with thy mighty name I grace these lays;
I seek to glorify myself alone:
For that some precious favor thou hast shown
To my endeavor in a bygone time,
And by this token I would have it known
Thou art my friend, and friendly to my rhyme!
It is my dear ambition now to climb
Still higher in thy thought,— if my bold pen
May thrust on contemplations more sublime. —
But I am thirsty for thy praise, for when
We gain applauses from the great in name,
We seem to be partakers of *their* fame.

HERO AND LEANDER.

O Bards of old! what sorrows have ye sung.
And tragic stories, chronicled in stone,—
Sad Philomel restored her ravished tongue,
And transformed Niobe in dumbness shown;
Sweet Sappho on her love forever calls,
And Hero on the drowned Leander falls!

Was it that spectacles of sadder plights
Should make our blisses relish the more high?
Then all fair dames, and maidens, and true knights,
Whose flourished fortunes prosper in Love's eye,
Weep here, unto a tale of ancient grief,
Traced from the course of an old bas-relief.

There stands Abydos! — here is Sestos' steep,
Hard by the gusty margin of the sea,
Where sprinkling waves continually do leap;
And that is where those famous lovers be,
A builded gloom shot up into the gray,
As if the first tall watch-tower of the day.

Lo! how the lark soars upward and is gone!
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky,
His voice is heard, though body there is none,
And rain-like music scatters from on high;
But Love would follow with a falcon spite,
To pluck the minstrel from his dewy height.

For Love hath framed a ditty of regrets,
Tuned to the hollow sobbings on the shore,
A vexing sense, that with like music frets,
And chimes this dismal burthen o'er and o'er
Saying, Leander's joys are past and spent,
Like stars extinguished in the firmament.

For ere the golden crevices of morn
Let in those regal luxuries of light,
Which all the variable east adorn,
And hang rich fringes on the skirts of night,
Leander, weaning from sweet Hero's side,
Must leave a widow where he found a bride.

Hark! how the billows beat upon the sand!
Like pawing steeds impatient of delay;
Meanwhile their rider, lingering on the land,
Dallies with Love, and holds farewell at bay
A too short span.— How tedious slow is grief!
But parting renders time both sad and brief.

"Alas! (he sighed) that this first glimpsing light,
Which makes the wide world tenderly appear,
Should be the burning signal for my flight,
From all the world's best image, which is here;
Whose very shadow, in my fond compare,
Shines far more bright than Beauty's self elsewhere."

Their cheeks are white as blossoms of the dark,
Whose leaves close up and show the outward pale,
And those fair mirrors where their joys did spark,
All dim and tarnished with a dreary veil,
No more to kindle till the night's return,
Like stars replenished at Joy's golden urn.

Even thus they creep into the spectral gray,
That cramps the landscape in its narrow brim,
As when two shadows by old Lethe stray,
He clasping her and she entwining him;
Like trees wind-parted that embrace anon,
True love so often goes before 't is gone.

For what rich merchant but will pause in fear,
To trust his wealth to the unsafe abyss?
So Hero dotes upon her treasure here,
And sums the loss with many an anxious kiss,
Whilst her fond eyes grow dizzy in her head,
Fear aggravating fear with shows of dread.

She thinks how many have been sunk and drowned,
And spies their snow-white bones below the deep,
Then calls huge congregated monsters round,
And plants a rock wherever he would leap;
Anon she dwells on a fantastic dream,
Which she interprets of that fatal stream.

Saying, "That honeyed fly I saw was thee,
Which lighted on a water-lily's cup,
When, lo! the flower, enamored of my bee,
Closed on him suddenly and locked him up,
And he was smothered in her drenching dew;
Therefore this day thy drowning I shall rue."

But next, remembering her virgin fame,
She clips him in her arms and bids him go,
But seeing him break loose repents her shame,
And plucks him back upon her bosom's snow;
And tears unfix her iced resolve again,
As steadfast frosts are thawed by showers of rain.

O for a type of parting! — Love to love
Is like the fond attraction of two spheres,
Which needs a godlike effort to remove,
And then sink down their sunny atmospheres
In rain and darkness on each ruined heart,
Nor yet their melodies will sound apart.

So brave Leander sunders from his bride;
The wrenching pang disparts his soul in twain,
Half stays with her, half goes towards the tide,—
And life must ache until they join again.
Now wouldst thou know the wideness of the wound
Mete every step he takes upon the ground.

And for the agony and bosom-throe,
Let it be measured by the wide vast air,
For that is infinite, and so is woe,
Since parted lovers breathe it everywhere.
Look how it heaves Leander's laboring chest,
Panting, at poise, upon a rocky crest!

From which he leaps into the scooping brine,
That shocks his bosom with a double chill;
Because, all hours, till the slow sun's decline,
That cold divorcer will betwixt them still;
Wherefore he likens it to Styx' foul tide,
Where life grows death upon the other side.

Then sadly he confronts his two-fold toil
Against rude waves and an unwilling mind,
Wishing, alas! with the stout rower's toil,
That like a rower he might gaze behind,
And watch that lonely statue he hath left
On her bleak summit, weeping and bereft!

Yet turning oft, he sees her troubled locks
Pursue him still the furthest that they may;
Her marble arms that overstretch the rocks,
And her pale passioned hands that seem to pray
In dumb petition to the gods above:
Love prays devoutly when it prays for love!

Then with deep sighs he blows away the wave,
That hangs superfluous tears upon his cheek,
And bans his labor like a hopeless slave,
That, chained in hostile galley, faint and weak,
Plies on despairing through the restless foam,
Thoughtful of his lost love, and far-off home.

The drowsy mist before him chill and dank,
Like a dull lethargy o'erleans the sea,
When he rows on against the utter blank,
Steering as if to dim eternity,—
Like Love's frail ghost departing with the dawn;
A failing shadow in the twilight drawn.

And soon is gone,— or nothing but a faint
And failing image in the eye of thought;
That mocks his model with an after-paint,
And stains an atom like the shape she sought;
Then with her earnest vows she hopes to fee
The old and hoary majesty of sea.

"O King of waves, and brother of high Jove,
Preserve my sumless venture there afloat;
A woman's heart, and its whole wealth of love,
Are all embarked upon that little boat;
Nay, but two loves, two lives, a double fate
A perilous voyage for so dear a freight.

"If impious mariners be stained with crime,
Shake not in awful rage thy hoary locks,
Lay by thy storms until another time,
Lest my frail bark be dashed against the rocks:
Or rather smoothe thy deeps that he may fly
Like Love himself, upon a seeming sky!

"Let all thy herded monsters sleep beneath,
Nor gore him with crooked tusks, or wreathéd horns;
Let no fierce sharks destroy him with their teeth,
Nor spine-fish wound him with their venomed thorns;
But if he faint, and timely succor lack,
Let ruthful dolphins rest him on their back.

"Let no false dimpling whirlpools suck him in,
Nor slimy quicksands smother his sweet breath;
Let no jagged corals tear his tender skin,
Nor mountain billows bury him in death;"—
And with that thought forestalling her own fears,
She drowned his painted image in her tears.

By this, the climbing sun, with rest repaired
Looked through the gold embrasures of the sky,
And asked the drowsy world how she had fared;—
The drowsy world shone brightened in reply;
And smiling off her fogs, his slanting beam
Spied young Leander in the middle stream.

His face was pallid, but the hectic morn
Had hung a lying crimson on his cheeks,
And slanderous sparkles in his eyes forlorn;
So death lies ambushed in consumptive streaks;
But inward grief was writhing o'er its task,
As heart-sick jesters weep behind the mask.

He thought of Hero and the lost delight,
Her last embracings, and the space between;
He thought of Hero and the future night,
Her speechless rapture and enamored mien,
When, lo! before him, scarce two galleys' space,
His thoughts confronted with another face!

Her aspect 's like a moon divinely fair,
But makes the midnight darker that it lies on;
'T is so beclouded with her coal-black hair
That densely skirts her luminous horizon,
Making her doubly fair, thus darkly set,
As marble lies advantaged upon jet.

She 's all too bright, too argent, and too pale,
To be a woman; — but a woman's double,
Reflected on the wave so faint and frail,
She tops the billows like an air-blown bubble;
Or dim creation of a morning dream,
Fair as the wave-bleached lily of the stream.

The very rumor strikes his seeing dead:
Great beauty like great fear first stuns the sense:
He knows not if her lips be blue or red,
Nor of her eyes can give true evidence:
Like murder's witness swooning in the court,
His sight falls senseless by its own report.

Anon resuming, it declares her eyes
Are tinct with azure, like two crystal wells
That drink the blue complexion of the skies,
Or pearls out-peeping from their silvery shells:
Her polished brow, it is an ample plain,
To lodge vast contemplations of the main.

Her lips might corals seem, but corals near,
Stray through her hair like blossoms on a bower;
And o'er the weaker red still domineer,
And make it pale by tribute to more power;
Her rounded cheeks are of still paler hue,
Touched by the bloom of water, tender blue.

Thus he beholds her rocking on the water,
Under the glossy umbrage of her hair,
Like pearly Amphitrite's fairest daughter,
Naiad, or Nereid, or Siren fair,
Mislodging music in her pitiless breast,
A nightingale within a falcon's nest.

They say there be such maidens in the deep,
Charming poor mariners, that all too near
By mortal lullabies fall dead asleep,
As drowsy men are poisoned through the ear;
Therefore Leander's fears begin to urge,
This snowy swan is come to sing his dirge.

At which he falls into a deadly chill,
And strains his eyes upon her lips apart;
Fearing each breath to feel that prelude shrill,
Pierce through his marrow, like a breath-blown dart
Shot sudden from an Indian's hollow cane,
With mortal venom fraught, and fiery pain.

Here, then, poor wretch, how he begins to crowd
A thousand thoughts within a pulse's space;
There seemed so brief a pause of life allowed,
His mind stretched universal, to embrace
The whole wide world, in an extreme farewell,—
A moment's musing — but an age to tell.

For there stood Hero, widowed at a glance,
The foreseen sum of many a tedious fact,
Pale cheeks, dim eyes, and withered countenance,
A wasted ruin that no wasting lacked;
Time's tragic consequents ere time began,
A world of sorrow in a tear-drop's span.

A moment's thinking is an hour in words,—
An hour of words is little for some woes;
Too little breathing a long life affords,
For love to paint itself by perfect shows;
Then let his love and grief unwronged lie dumb,
Whilst Fear, and that it fears, together come.

As when the crew, hard by some jutty cape,
Struck pale and panicked by the billows' roar,
Lay by all timely measures of escape,
And let their bark go driving on the shore;
So frayed Leander, drifting to his wreck,
Gazing on Scylla, falls upon her neck.

For he hath all forgot the swimmer's art,
The rower's cunning, and the pilot's skill,
Letting his arms fall down in languid part,
Swayed by the waves, and nothing by his will,
Till soon he jars against that glossy skin,
Solid like glass, though seemingly as thin.

Lo! how she startles at the warning shock
And straightway girds him to her radiant breast.
More like his safe smooth harbor than his rock;
Poor wretch, he is so faint and toil-opprest,
He cannot loose him from his grappling foe,
Whether for love or hate, she lets not go.

His eyes are blinded with the sleety brine,
His ears are deafened with the wildering noise;
He asks the purpose of her fell design,
But foamy waves choke up his struggling voice;
Under the ponderous sea his body dips,
And Hero's name dies bubbling on his lips.

Look how a man is lowered to his grave;
A yearning hollow in the green earth's lap;
So he is sunk into the yawning wave,
The plunging sea fills up the watery gap;
Anon he is all gone, and nothing seen,
But likeness of green turf and hillocks green.

And where he swam the constant sun lies sleeping,
Over the verdant plain that makes his bed;
And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
Like gamesome boys over the church-yard dead;
The light in vain keeps looking for his face,
Now screaming sea-fowl settle in his place.

Yet weep and watch for him, though all in vain!
Ye moaning billows, seek him as ye wander!
Ye gazing sunbeams, look for him again!
Ye winds, grow hoarse with asking for Leander!
Ye did but spare him for more cruel rape,
Sea-storm and ruin in a female shape!

She says 't is love hath bribed her to this deed,
The glancing of his eyes did so bewitch her.
O bootless theft! unprofitable meed!
Love's treasury is sacked, but she no richer;
The sparkles of his eyes are cold and dead,
And all his golden looks are turned to lead!

She holds the casket, but her simple hand
Hath spilled its dearest jewel by the way;
She hath life's empty garment at command,
But her own death lies covert in the prey;
As if a thief should steal a tainted vest,
Some dead man's spoil, and sicken of his pest.

Now she compels him to her deeps below,
Hiding his face beneath her plenteous hair,
Which jealously she shakes all round her brow,
For dread of envy, though no eyes are there
But seals', and all brute tenants of the deep,
Which heedless through the wave their journeys keep.

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore him, murmuring with joyous haste
In too rash ignorance, as he had been
Born to the texture of that watery waste;
That which she breathed and sighed, the emerald wave
How could her pleasant home become his grave!

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore her treasure, with a face too nigh
To mark how life was altered in its mien,
Or how the light grew torpid in his eye,
Or how his pearly breath, unprisoned there,
Flew up to join the universal air.

She could not miss the throbbings of his heart,
Whilst her own pulse so wantoned in its joy;
She could not guess he struggled to depart,
And when he strove no more, the hapless boy!
She read his mortal stillness for content,
Feeling no fear where only love was meant.

Soon she alights upon her ocean-floor,
And straight unyokes her arms from her fair prize;
Then on his lovely face begins to pore,
As if to glut her soul; — her hungry eyes
Have grown so jealous of her arms' delight;
It seems, she hath no other sense but sight.

But, O, sad marvel! O, most bitter strange!
What dismal magic makes his cheek so pale?
Why will he not embrace,— why not exchange
Her kindly kisses; — wherefore not exhale
Some odorous message from life's ruby gates,
Where she his first sweet embassy awaits?

Her eyes, poor watchers, fixed upon his looks,
Are grappled with a wonder near to grief,
As one, who pores on undeciphered books,
Strains vain surmise, and dodges with belief;
So she keeps gazing with a mazy thought,
Framing a thousand doubts that end in naught.

Too stern inscription for a page so young,
The dark translation of his look was death!
But death was written in an alien tongue,
And learning was not by to give it breath;
So one deep woe sleeps buried in its seal,
Which Time, untimely, hasteth to reveal.

Meanwhile she sits unconscious of her hap,
Nursing Death's marble effigy, which there
With heavy head lies pillowed in her lap,
And elbows all unhinged; — his sleeking hair
Creeps o'er her knees, and settles where his hand
Leans with lax fingers crooked against the sand;

And there lies spread in many an oozy trail,
Like glossy weeds hung from a chalky base,
That shows no whiter than his brow is pale;
So soon the wintry death had bleached his face
Into cold marble,— with blue chilly shades,
Showing wherein the freezy blood pervades.

And o'er his steadfast cheek a furrowed pain
Hath set, and stiffened like a storm in ice,
Showing by drooping lines the deadly strain
Of mortal anguish; — yet you might gaze twice
Ere Death it seemed, and not his cousin, Sleep,
That through those creviced lids did underpeep.

But all that tender bloom about his eyes,
Is Death's own violets, which his utmost rite
It is to scatter when the red rose dies;
For blue is chilly, and akin to white:
Also he leaves some tinges on his lips,
Which he hath kissed with such cold frosty nips.

"Surely," quoth she, "he sleeps, the senseless thing,
Oppressed and faint with toiling in the stream!"
Therefore she will not mar his rest, but sing
So low, her tune shall mingle with his dream;
Meanwhile, her lily fingers tasks to twine
His uncrispt locks uncurling in the brine.

"O lovely boy!" — thus she attuned her voice,—
"Welcome, thrice welcome, to a sea-maid's home,
My love-mate thou shalt be, and true heart's choice;
How have I longed such a twin-self should come,—
A lonely thing, till this sweet chance befell,
My heart kept sighing like a hollow shell.

"Here thou shalt live beneath this secret dome,
An ocean-bower; defended by the shade
Of quiet waters, a cool emerald gloom
To lap thee all about. Nay, be not frayed
Those are but shady fishes that sail by
Like antic clouds across my liquid sky!

"Look how the sunbeam burns upon their scales,
And shows rich glimpses of their Tyrian skins;
They flash small lightnings from their vigorous tails
And winking stars are kindled at their fins;
These shall divert thee in thy weariest mood,
And seek thy hand for gamesomeness and food.

"Lo! those green pretty leaves with tassel bells.
My flowerets those, that never pine for drowth;
Myself did plant them in the dappled shells,
That drink the wave with such a rosy mouth,—
Pearls wouldst thou have beside? crystals to shine?
I had such treasures once,— now they are thine.

"Now, lay thine ear against this golden sand,
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea,
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land,—
Is 't not a rich and wondrous melody?
I have lain hours, and fancied in its tone
I heard the languages of ages gone!

"I too can sing when it shall please thy choice,
And breathe soft tunes through a melodious shell,
Though heretofore I have but set my voice
To some long sighs, grief harmonized, to tell
How desolate I fared; — but this sweet change
Will add new notes of gladness to my range!

"Or bid me speak, and I will tell thee tales,
Which I have framed out of the noise of waves;
Ere now, I have communed with senseless gales,
And held vain colloquies with barren caves;
But I could talk to thee whole days and days,
Only to word my love a thousand ways.

"But if thy lips will bless me with their speech,
Then ope, sweet oracles! and I'll be mute;
I was born ignorant for thee to teach,
Nay, all love's lore to thy dear looks impute;
Then ope thine eyes, fair teachers, by whose light
I saw to give away my heart aright!"

But cold and deaf the sullen creature lies,
Over her knees, and with concealing clay
Like hoarding Avarice locks up his eyes,
And leaves her world impoverished of day;
Then at his cruel lips she bends to plead,
But there the door is closed against her need.

Surely he sleeps,—so her false wits infer!
Alas! poor sluggard, ne'er to wake again!
Surely he sleeps, yet without any stir
That might denote a vision in his brain;
Or if he does not sleep, he feigns too long,
Twice she hath reached the ending of her song.

Therefore, 't is time she tells him to uncover
Those radiant jesters, and disperse her fears,
Whereby her April face is shaded over,
Like rainy clouds just ripe for showering tears;
Nay, if he will not wake, so poor she gets,
Herself must rob those locked up cabinets.

With that she stoops above his brow, and bids
Her busy hands forsake his tangled hair,
And tenderly lift up those coffer-lids,
That she may gaze upon the jewels there,
Like babes that pluck an early bud apart,
To know the dainty color of its heart.

Now, picture one, soft creeping to a bed,
Who slowly parts the fringe-hung canopies,
And then starts back to find the sleeper dead;
So she looks in on his uncovered eyes,
And seeing all within so drear and dark,
Her own bright soul dies in her like a spark.

Backward she falls, like a pale prophetess,
Under the swoon of holy divination:
And what had all surpassed her simple guess,
She now resolves in this dark revelation;
Death's very mystery,— oblivious death; —
Long sleep,— deep night, and an entrancéd breath.

Yet life, though wounded sore, not wholly slain,
Merely obscured, and not extinguished, lies;
Her breath that stood at ebb, soon flows again,
Heaving her hollow breast with heavy sighs,
And light comes in and kindles up the gloom,
To light her spirit from its transient tomb.

Then like the sun, awakened at new dawn,
With pale bewildered face she peers about,
And spies blurred images obscurely drawn,
Uncertain shadows in a haze of doubt;
But her true grief grows shapely by degrees,
A perished creature lying on her knees.

And now she knows how that old Murther preys,
Whose quarry on her lap lies newly slain:
How he roams all abroad and grimly slays,
Like a lean tiger in Love's own domain;
Parting fond mates,— and oft in flowery lawns
Bereaves mild mothers of their milky fawns.

O, too dear knowledge! O, pernicious earning!
Foul curse engraven upon beauty's page!
Even now the sorrow of that deadly learning
Ploughs up her brow, like an untimely age,
And on her cheek stamps verdict of death's truth
By canker blights upon the bud of youth!

For as unwholesome winds decay the leaf,
So her cheeks' rose is perished by her sighs,
And withers in the sickly breath of grief;
Whilst unacquainted rheum bedims her eyes,
Tears, virgin tears, the first that ever leapt
From those young lids, now plentifully wept.

Whence being shed, the liquid crystalline
Drops straightway down, refusing to partake
In gross admixture with the baser brine,
But shrinks and hardens into pearls opaque,
Hereafter to be worn on arms and ears;
So one maid's trophy is another's tears!

O foul Arch-Shadow, thou old cloud of Night,
(Thus in her frenzy she began to wail,)
Thou blank oblivion — blotter out of light,
Life's ruthless murderer, and dear Love's bale!
Why hast thou left thy havoc incomplete,
Leaving me here, and slaying the more sweet?

Lo! what a lovely ruin thou hast made!
Alas! alas! thou hast no eyes to see,
And blindly slew'st him in misguided shade.
Would I had lent my doting sense to thee!
But now I turn to thee, a willing mark,
Thine arrows miss me in the aimless dark!

"O, doubly cruel! — twice misdoing spite,
But I will guide thee with my helping eyes,
Or walk the wide world through, devoid of sight,
Yet thou shalt know me by my many sighs.
Nay, then thou shouldst have spared my rose, false Death,
And known Love's flower by smelling his sweet breath;

"Or, when thy furious rage was round him dealing,
Love should have grown from touching of his skin;
But like cold marble thou art all unfeeling,
And hast no ruddy springs of warmth within,
And being but a shape of freezing bone,
Thy touching only turned my love to stone!

"And here, alas! he lies across my knees,
With cheeks still colder than the stilly wave,
The light beneath his eyelids seems to freeze;
Here then, since Love is dead and lacks a grave,
O, come and dig it in my sad heart's core —
That wound will bring a balsam for its sore!

"For art thou not a sleep where sense of ill
Lies stingless, like a sense benumbed with cold,
Healing all hurts only with sleep's good-will?
So shall I slumber, and perchance behold
My living love in dreams,— O, happy night,
That lets me company his banished spright!

"O, poppy death! — sweet poisoner of sleep;
Where shall I seek for thee, oblivious drug,
That I may steep thee in my drink, and creep
Out of life's coil? Look, Idol! how I hug
Thy dainty image in this strict embrace,
And kiss this clay-cold model of thy face!

"Put out, put out these sun-consuming lamps!
I do but read my sorrows by their shine;
O, come and quench them with thy oozy damps,
And let my darkness intermix with thine;
Since love is blinded, wherefore should I see?
Now love is death,— death will be love to me!

"Away, away, this vain complaining breath,
It does but stir the troubles that I weep;
Let it be hushed and quieted, sweet Death;
The wind must settle ere the wave can sleep,—
Since love is silent I would fain be mute;
O, Death, be gracious to my dying suit!"

Thus far she pleads, but pleading naught avails her,
For Death, her sullen burthen, deigns no heed;
Then with dumb craving arms, since darkness fails her,
She prays to heaven's fair light, as if her need
Inspired her there were gods to pity pain,
Or end it,— but she lifts her arms in vain!

Poor gilded Grief! the subtle light by this
With mazy gold creeps through her watery mine,
And, diving downward through the green abyss,
Lights up her palace with an amber shine;
There, falling on her arms,— the crystal skin
Reveals the ruby tide that fares within.

Look how the fulsome beam would hang a glory
On her dark hair, but the dark hairs repel it;
Look how the perjured glow suborns a story
On her pale lips, but lips refuse to tell it;
Grief will not swerve from grief, however told
On coral lips, or charactered in gold;

Or else, thou maid! safe anchored on Love's neck
Listing the hapless doom of young Leander,
Thou wouldst not shed a tear for that old wreck,
Sitting secure where no wild surges wander;
Whereas the woe moves on with tragic pace,
And shows its sad reflection in thy face.

Thus having travelled on, and tracked the tale,
Like the due course of an old bas-relief,
Where Tragedy pursues her progress pale,
Brood here a while upon that sea-maid's grief,
And take a deeper imprint from the frieze
Of that young Fate, with Death upon her knees.

Then whilst the melancholy Muse withal
Resumes her music in a sadder tone,
Meanwhile the sunbeam strikes upon the wall,
Conceive that lovely siren to live on,
Even as Hope whispered, the Promethean light
Would kindle up the dead Leander's spright.

"'T is light," she says, "that feeds the glittering stars.
And those were stars set in his heavenly brow;
But this salt cloud, this cold sea-vapor, mars
Their radiant breathing, and obscures them now;
Therefore I 'll lay him in the clear blue air,
And see how these dull orbs will kindle there."

Swiftly as dolphins glide, or swifter yet,
With dead Leander in her fond arms' fold,
She cleaves the meshes of that radiant net
The sun hath twined above of liquid gold,
Nor slacks till on the margin of the land
She lays his body on the glowing sand.

There, like a pearly waif, just past the reach
Of foamy billows he lies cast. Just then,
Some listless fishers, straying down the beach,
Spy out this wonder. Thence the curious men,
Low crouching, creep into a thicket brake,
And watch her doings till their rude hearts ache.

First she begins to chafe him till she faints,
Then falls upon his mouth with kisses many,
And sometimes pauses in her own complaints
To list his breathing, but there is not any,—
Then looks into his eyes where no light dwells;
Light makes no pictures in such muddy wells.

The hot sun parches his discovered eyes,
The hot sun beats on his discolored limbs,
The sand is oozy whereupon he lies,
Soiling his fairness; — then away she swims,
Meaning to gather him a daintier bed,
Plucking the cool fresh weeds, brown, green, and red.

But, simple-witted thief, while she dives under
Another robs her of her amorous theft;
The ambushed fishermen creep forth to plunder,
And steal the unwatched treasure she has left;
Only his void impression dints the sands:
Leander is purloined by stealthy hands!

Lo! how she shudders off the beaded wave!
Like Grief all over tears, and senseless falls,
His void imprint seems hollowed for her grave;
Then, rising on her knees, looks round and calls
On Hero! Hero! — having learned this name
Of his last breath, she calls him by the same.

Then with her frantic hands she rends her hairs,
And casts them forth, sad keepsakes, to the wind,
As if in plucking those she plucked her cares;
But grief lies deeper, and remains behind
Like a barbed arrow, rankling in her brain,
Turning her very thoughts to throbs of pain.

Anon her tangled locks are left alone,
And down upon the sand she meekly sits,
Hard by the foam, as humble as a stone,
Like an enchanted maid beside her wits,
That ponders with a look serene and tragic,
Stunned by the mighty mystery of magic.

Or think of Ariadne's utter trance,
Crazed by the flight of that disloyal traitor,
Who left her gazing on the green expanse
That swallowed up his track,— yet this would mate her,
Even in the cloudy summit of her woe,
When o'er the far sea-brim she saw him go.

For even so she bows, and bends her gaze
O'er the eternal waste, as if to sum
Its waves by weary thousands all her days,
Dismally doomed! meanwhile the billows come,
And coldly dabble with her quiet feet,
Like any bleaching stones they wont to greet.

And thence into her lap have boldly sprung,
Washing her weedy tresses to and fro,
That round her crouching knees have darkly hung;
But she sits careless of waves' ebb and flow,
Like a lone beacon on a desert coast,
Showing where all her hope was wrecked and lost.

Yet whether in the sea or vaulted sky,
She knoweth not her love's abrupt resort,
So like a shape of dreams he left her eye,
Winking with doubt. Meanwhile, the churls' report
Has thronged the beach with many a curious face,
That peeps upon her from its hiding-place.

And here a head, and there a brow half seen,
Dodges behind a rock. Here on his hands
A mariner his crumpled cheeks doth lean
Over a rugged crest. Another stands,
Holding his harmful arrow at the head,
Still checked by human caution and strange dread.

One stops his ears,— another close beholder
Whispers unto the next his grave surmise;
This crouches down,— and just above his shoulder,
A woman's pity saddens in her eyes,
And prompts her to befriend that lonely grief,
With all sweet helps of sisterly relief.

And down the sunny beach she paces slowly,
With many doubtful pauses by the way;
Grief hath an influence so hushed and holy,—
Making her twice attempt, ere she can lay
Her hand upon that sea-maid's shoulder white,
Which makes her startle up in wild affright.

And, like a seal, she leaps into the wave,
That drowns the shrill remainder of her scream;
Anon the sea fills up the watery cave,
And seals her exit with a foamy seam,—
Leaving those baffled gazers on the beach,
Turning in uncouth wonder each to each.

Some watch, some call, some see her head emerge,
Wherever a brown weed falls through the foam;
Some point to white eruptions of the surge: —
But she is vanished to her shady home,
Under the deep, inscrutable,— and there
Weeps in a midnight made of her own hair.

Now here the sighing winds, before unheard,
Forth from their cloudy caves begin to blow,
Till all the surface of the deep is stirred,
Like to the panting grief it hides below;
And heaven is covered with a stormy rack
Soiling the waters with its inky black.

The screaming fowl resigns her finny prey,
And labors shoreward with a bending wing,
Rowing against the wind her toilsome way;
Meanwhile, the curling billows chafe, and fling
Their dewy frost still further on the stones,
That answer to the wind with hollow groans.

And here and there a fisher's far-off bark
Flies with the sun's last glimpse upon its sail,
Like a bright flame amid the waters dark,
Watched with the hope and fear of maidens pale.
And anxious mothers that upturn their brows,
Freighting the gusty wind with frequent vows,

For that the horrid deep has no sure track
To guide love safe into his homely haven.
And, lo! the storm grows blacker in its wrath,
O'er the dark billow brooding like a raven,
That bodes of death and widow's sorrowing,
Under the dusty covert of his wing.

And so day ended. But no vesper spark
Hung forth its heavenly sign; but sheets of flame
Played round the savage features of the dark,
Making night horrible. That night, there came
A weeping maiden to high Sestos' steep,
And tore her hair and gazed upon the deep.

And waved aloft her bright and ruddy torch,
Whose flame the boastful wind so rudely fanned,
That oft it would recoil, and basely scorch
The tender covert of her sheltering hand;
Which yet, for love's dear sake, disdained retire,
And, like a glorying martyr, braved the fire.

For that was love's own sign and beacon guide
Across the Hellespont's wide weary space,
Wherein he nightly struggled with the tide;
Look what a red it forges on her face,
As if she blushed at holding such a light,
Even in the unseen presence of the night!

Whereas her tragic cheek is truly pale,
And colder than the rude and ruffian air
That howls into her ear a horrid tale
Of storm, and wreck, and uttermost despair,
Saying, "Leander floats amid the surge,
And those are dismal waves that sing his dirge."

And, hark! — a grieving voice, trembling and faint,
Blends with the hollow sobbings of the sea;
Like the sad music of a siren's plaint,
But shriller than Leander's voice should be,
Unless the wintry death had changed its tone,—
Wherefore she thinks she hears his spirit moan.

For now, upon each brief and breathless pause
Made by the raging winds, it plainly calls
On Hero! Hero! — whereupon she draws
Close to the dizzy brink, that ne'er appalls
Her brave and constant spirit to recoil,
However the wild billows toss and toil.

"O! dost thou live under the deep, deep sea?
I thought such love as thine could never die;
If thou hast gained an immortality
From the kind pitying sea-god, so will I;
And this false cruel tide, that used to sever
Our hearts, shall be our common home forever!

"There we will sit and sport upon one billow,
And sing our ocean-ditties all the day,
And lie together on the same green pillow,
That curls above us with its dewy spray;
And ever in one presence live and dwell,
Like two twin pearls within the self-same shell."

One moment, then, upon the dizzy verge
She stands; — with face upturned against the sky;
A moment more, upon the foamy surge
She gazes, with a calm despairing eye;
Feeling that awful pause of blood and breath
Which life endures when it confronts with death: —

Then from the giddy steep she madly springs,
Grasping her maiden robes, that vainly kept
Panting abroad, like unavailing wings,
To save her from her death.— The sea-maid wept,
And in a crystal cave her corse enshrined;
No meaner sepulchre should Hero find!

LYCUS, THE CENTAUR.

TO J. H. REYNOLDS, ESQ.

MY DEAR REYNOLDS: You will remember "Lycus." It was written in the pleasant spring-time of our friendship, and I am glad to maintain that association, by connecting your name with the poem. It will gratify me to find that you regard it with the old partiality for the writings of each other which prevailed in those days. For my own sake, I must regret that your pen goes now into far other records than those which used to delight me.

Your true friend and brother.

T. HOOD.

LYCUS, THE CENTAUR.

FROM AN UNROLLED MANUSCRIPT OF APOLLONIUS CURIUS.

THE ARGUMENT.

Lycus, detained by Circe in her magical dominion, is beloved by a Water Nymph, who, desiring to render him immortal, has recourse to the Sorceress. Circe gives her an incantation to pronounce, which should turn Lycus into a horse; but the horrible effect of the charm causing her to break off in the midst, he becomes a Centaur.

WHO hath ever been lured and bound by a spell
To wander, foredoomed, in that circle of hell
Where Witchery works with her will like a god,
Works more than the wonders of time at a nod,—
At a word,— at a touch,— at a flash of the eye;
But each form is a cheat, and each sound is a lie,
Things born of a wish — to endure for a thought,
Or last for long ages — to vanish to naught,
Or put on new semblance? O Jove, I had given
The throne of a kingdom to know if that heaven
And the earth and its streams were of Circe, or whether
They kept the world's birth-day and brightened together!
For I loved them in terror, and constantly dreaded
That the earth where I trod, and the cave where I bedded,
The face I might dote on, should live out the lease
Of the charm that created, and suddenly cease:
And I gave me to slumber, as if from one dream
To another — each horrid — and drank of the stream

Like a first taste of blood, lest as water I quaffed
Swift poison, and never should breathe from the draught,—
Such drink as her own monarch-husband drained up
When he pledged her, and Fate closed his eyes in the cup.
And I plucked of the fruit with held breath, and a fear
That the branch would start back and scream out in my ear;
For once, at my suppering, I plucked in the dusk
An apple, juice-gushing and fragrant of musk;
But by daylight my fingers were crimsoned with gore,
And the half-eaten fragment was flesh at the core;
And once — only once — for the love of its blush,
I broke a bloom-bough, but there came such a gush
On my hand, that it fainted away in weak fright,
While the leaf-hidden woodpecker shrieked at the sight;
And, O! such an agony thrilled in that note,
That my soul, startling up, beat its wings in my throat,
As it longed to be free of a body whose hand
Was doomed to work torments a Fury had planned!

There I stood without stir, yet how willing to flee,
As if rooted and horror-turned into a tree,—
O! for innocent death,— and, to suddenly win it,
I drank of the stream, but no poison was in it;
I plunged in its waters, but ere I could sink
Some invisible fate pulled me back to the brink;
I sprang from the rock, from its pinnacle height,
But fell on the grass with a grasshopper's flight;
I ran at my fears — they were fears and no more,
For the bear would not mangle my limbs, nor the boar,
But moaned,— all their brutalized flesh could not smother
The horrible truth,— we were kin to each other!

They were mournfully gentle, and grouped for relief,
All foes in their skin, but all friends in their grief:

The leopard was there,— baby-mild in its feature;
And the tiger, black-barred, with the gaze of a creature
That knew gentle pity; the bristle-backed boar,
His innocent tusks stained with mulberry gore;
And the laughing hyena — but laughing no more;
And the snake, not with magical orbs to devise
Strange death, but with woman's attraction of eyes;
The tall ugly ape, that still bore a dim shine
Through his hairy eclipse of a manhood divine;
And the elephant stately, with more than its reason,
How thoughtful in sadness! but this is no season
To reckon them up, from the lag-bellied toad
To the mammoth, whose sobs shook his ponderous load.
There were woes of all shapes, wretched forms, when I came
That hung down their heads with a human-like shame;
The elephant hid in the boughs, and the bear
Shed over his eyes the dark veil of his hair;
And the womanly soul, turning sick with disgust,
Tried to vomit herself from her serpentine crust;
While all groaned their groans into one at their lot,
As I brought them the image of what they were not.

Then rose a wild sound of the human voice choking
Through vile brutal organs — low tremulous croaking;
Cries swallowed abruptly — deep animal tones
Attuned to strange passion, and full-uttered groans;
All shuddering weaker, till hushed in a pause
Of tongues in mute motion and wide-yawning jaws;
And I guessed that those horrors were meant to tell o'er
The tale of their woes, but the silence told more
That writhed on their tongues; and I knelt on the sod,
And prayed with my voice to the cloud-stirring God,
For the sad congregation of supplicants there,
That upturned to his heaven brute faces of prayer;

And I ceased, and they uttered a moaning so deep,
That I wept for my heart-ease,— but they could not weep
And gazed with red eyeballs, all wistfully dry,
At the comfort of tears in a stag's human eye.
Then I motioned them round, and, to soothe their distress,
I caressed, and they bent them to meet my caress,
Their necks to my arm, and their heads to my palm,
And with poor grateful eyes suffered meekly and calm
Those tokens of kindness, withheld by hard fate
From returns that might chill the warm pity to hate;
So they passively bowed — save the serpent, that leapt
To my breast like a sister, and pressingly crept
In embrace of my neck, and with close kisses blistered
My lips in rash love,— then drew backward, and glistered
Her eyes in my face, and, loud hissing affright,
Dropt down, and swift started away from my sight!

This sorrow was theirs, but thrice wretched my lot,
Turned brute in my soul, though my body was not
When I fled from the sorrow of womanly faces,
That shrouded their woe in the shade of lone places,
And dashed off bright tears till their fingers were wet,
And then wiped their lids with long tresses of jet:
But I fled — though they stretched out their hands, all entangled
With hair, and blood-stained of the breasts they had mangled,—
Though they called — and perchance but to ask had I seen
Their loves, or to tell the vile wrongs that had been:
But I stayed not to hear, lest the story should hold
Some hell-form of words, some enchantment, once told,
Might translate me in flesh to a brute; and I dreaded
To gaze on their charms, lest my faith should be wedded

With some pity,— and love in that pity perchance,—
To a thing not all lovely; for once at a glance
Methought, where one sat, I descried a bright wonder
That flowed like a long silver rivulet under
The long fenny grass, with so lovely a breast,
Could it be a snake-tail made the charm of the rest?

So I roamed in that circle of Horrors, and Fear
Walked with me, by hills, and in valleys, and near
Clustered trees for their gloom — not to shelter from heat —
But lest a brute shadow should grow at my feet;
And besides that full oft in the sunshiny place
Dark shadows would gather like clouds on its face,
In the horrible likeness of demons, (that none
Could see, like invisible flames in the sun;)
But grew to one monster that seized on the light,
Like the dragon that strangles the moon in the night;
Fierce sphinxes, long serpents, and asps of the South;
Wild birds of huge beak, and all horrors that drouth
Engenders of slime in the land of the pest,
Vile shapes without shape, and foul bats of the West,
Bringing Night on their wings; and the bodies wherein
Great Brahma imprisons the spirits of sin,
Many-handed, that blent in one phantom of fight
Like a Titan, and threatfully warred with the light;
I have heard the wild shriek that gave signal to close,
When they rushed on that shadowy Python of foes,
That met with sharp beaks and wide gaping of jaws,
With flappings of wings, and fierce grasping of claws.
And whirls of long tails: — I have seen the quick flutter
Of fragments dissevered,— and necks stretched to utter
Long screamings of pain,— the swift motion of blows,
And wrestling of arms — to the flight at the close,

When the dust of the earth startled upward in rings,
And flew on the whirlwind that followed their wings.

Thus they fled — not forgotten — but often to grow
Like fears in my eyes, when I walked to and fro
In the shadows, and felt from some beings unseen
The warm touch of kisses, but clean or unclean
I knew not, nor whether the love I had won
Was of heaven or hell — till one day in the sun,
In its very noon-blaze, I could fancy a thing
Of beauty, but faint as the cloud-mirrors fling
On the gaze of the shepherd that watches the sky,
Half-seen, and half-dreamed in the soul of his eye.
And when in my musings I gazed on the stream,
In motionless trances of thought, there would seem
A face like that face, looking upward through mine;
With its eyes full of love, and the dim-drownéd shine
Of limbs and fair garments, like clouds in that blue
Serene: — there I stood for long hours but to view
Those fond earnest eyes that were ever uplifted
Towards me, and winked as the water-weed drifted
Between; but the fish knew that presence, and plied
Their long curvy tails, and swift darted aside.

There I gazed for lost time, and forgot all the things
That once had been wonders — the fishes with wings,
And the glimmer of magnified eyes that looked up
From the glooms of the bottom like pearls in a cup,
And the huge endless serpent of silvery gleam,
Slow winding along like a tide in the stream.
Some maid of the waters, some Naiad, methought
Held me dear in the pearl of her eye — and I brought
My wish to that fancy; and often I dashed
My limbs in the water, and suddenly splashed

The cool drops around me, yet clung to the brink,
Chilled by watery fears, how that Beauty might sink
With my life in her arms to her garden, and bind me
With its long tangled grasses, or cruelly wind me
In some eddy to hum out my life in her ear,
Like a spider-caught bee,— and in aid of that fear
Came the tardy remembrance — O, falsest of men!
Why was not that beauty remembered till then?
My love, my safe love, whose glad life would have run
Into mine — like a drop — that our fate might be one,
That now, even now,— may-be,—clasped in a dream,
That form which I gave to some jilt of the stream,
And gazed with fond eyes that her tears tried to smother
On a mock of those eyes that I gave to another!

Then I rose from the stream, but the eyes of my mind,
Still full of the tempter, kept gazing behind
On her crystalline face, while I painfully leapt
To the bank, and shook off the cursed waters, and wept
With my brow in the reeds; and the reeds to my ear
Bowed, bent by no wind, and in whispers of fear,
Growing small with large secrets, foretold me of one
That loved me,— but O to fly from her, and shun
Her love like a pest — though her love was as true
To mine as her stream to the heavenly blue;
For why should I love her with love that would bring
All misfortune, like Hate, on so joyous a thing?
Because of her rival,— even Her whose witch-face
I had slighted, and therefore was doomed in that place
To roam, and had roamed, where all horrors grew rank
Nine days ere I wept with my brow on that bank;
Her name be not named, but her spite would not fail
To our love like a blight; and they told me the tale

Of Scylla, and Picus, imprisoned to speak
His shrill-screaming woe through a woodpecker's beak.

Then they ceased—I had heard as the voice of my star
That told me the truth of my fortunes — thus far
I had read of my sorrow, and lay in the hush
Of deep meditation,— when, lo ! a light crush
Of the reeds, and I turned and looked round in the night
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipped of the light
Narrow-winking, the realized nymph of the stream,
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam
Of a fountain, and o'er her white arms she kept throwing
Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing
In falls to her feet, and the blue waters rolled
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,
Sun-spangled, gold-broidered, and fled far behind,
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclined
In the reeds, and I hungered to see her unseal
The buds of her eyes that would ope and reveal
The blue that was in them; and they oped and she raised
Two orbs of pure crystal, and timidly gazed
With her eyes on my eyes; but their color and shine
Was of that which they looked on, and mostly of mine —
For she loved me,— except when she blushed, and they sank,
Shame-humbled, to number the stones on the bank,
Or her play-idle fingers, while lisping she told me
How she put on her veil, and in love to behold me
Would wing through the sun till she fainted away
Like a mist, and then flew to her waters and lay
In love-patience long hours, and sore dazzled her eyes
In watching for mine 'gainst the midsummer skies.
But now they were healed,— O my heart, it still dances
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances,

And my image how small when it sank in the deep
Of her eyes where her soul was,— Alas! now they weep,
And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes
Shed invisible tears? Who beholds where her sighs
Flow in eddies, or see the ascents of the leaf
She has plucked with her tresses? Who listens her grief
Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat
Them together? Ah! surely her flowers float adown
To the sea unaccepted, and little ones drown
For need of her mercy,— even he whose twin-brother
Will miss him forever; and the sorrowful mother
Imploreth in vain for his body to kiss
And cling to, all dripping and cold as it is,
Because that soft pity is lost in hard pain!
We loved,— how we loved! — for I thought not again
Of the woes that were whispered like fears in that place
If I gave me to beauty. Her face was the face
Far away, and her eyes were the eyes that were drowned
For my absence,— her arms were the arms that sought round
And clasped me to naught; for I gazed and became
Only true to my falsehood, and had but one name
For two loves, and called ever on Ægle, sweet maid
Of the sky-loving waters,— and was not afraid
Of the sight of her skin; — for it never could be
Her beauty and love were misfortunes to me!

Thus our bliss had endured for a time-shortened space,
Like a day made of three, and the smile of her face
Had been with me for joy,— when she told me indeed
Her love was self-tasked with a work that would need
Some short hours, for in truth 't was the veriest pity
Our love should not last, and then sang me a ditty

Of one with warm lips that should love her, and love her
When suns were burnt dim and long ages past over.
So she fled with her voice, and I patiently nested
My limbs in the reeds, in still quiet, and rested
Till my thoughts grew extinct, and I sank in a sleep
Of dreams,— but their meaning was hidden too deep
To be read what their woe was;— but still it was woe
That was writ on all faces that swam to and fro
In that river of night;— and the gaze of their eyes
Was sad,— and the bend of their brows,— and their cries
Were seen, but I heard not. The warm touch of tears
Travelled down my cold cheeks, and I shook till my fears
Awaked me, and, lo! I was couched in a bower,
The growth of long summers reared up in an hour!
Then I said, in the fear of my dream, I will fly
From this magic, but could not, because that my eye
Grew love-idle among the rich blooms; and the earth
Held me down with its coolness of touch, and the mirth
Of some bird was above me,— who, even in fear,
Would startle the thrush? and methought there drew near
A form as of Ægle,— but it was not the face
Hope made, and I knew the witch-Queen of that place,
Even Circe the Cruel, that came like a Death
Which I feared, and yet fled not, for want of my breath.
There was thought in her face, and her eyes were not raised
From the grass at her foot, but I saw, as I gazed,
Her spite — and her countenance changed with her mind,
As she planned how to thrall me with beauty, and bind
My soul to her charms,— and her long tresses played
From shade into shine and from shine into shade,
Like a day in mid-autumn,— first fair, O how fair!
With long snaky locks of the adder-black hair

That clung round her neck,— those dark locks that I prize,
For the sake of a maid that once loved me with eyes
Of that fathomless hue,— but they changed as they rolled
And brightened, and suddenly blazed into gold
That she combed into flames, and the locks that fell down
Turned dark as they fell, but I slighted their brown,
Nor loved, till I saw the light ringlets shed wild,
That innocence wears when she is but a child;
And her eyes,— O, I ne'er had been witched with their shine,
Had they been any other, my Ægle, than thine!

Then I gave me to magic, and gazed till I maddened
In the full of their light,— but I saddened and saddened
The deeper I looked,— till I sank on the snow
Of her bosom, a thing made of terror and woe,
And answered its throb with a shudder of fears,
And hid my cold eyes from her eyes with my tears,
And strained her white arms with the still languid weight
Of a fainting distress. There she sat like the Fate
That is nurse unto Death, and bent over in shame
To hide me from her — the true Ægle — that came
With the words on her lips the false witch had foregiven
To make me immortal — for now I was even
At the portals of Death, who but waited the hush
Of world-sounds in my ear to cry welcome, and rush
With my soul to the banks of his black-flowing river.
O, would it had flown from my body forever,
Ere I listened those words, when I felt, with a start,
The life-blood rush back in one throb to my heart,
And saw the pale lips where the rest of that spell
Had perished in horror — and heard the farewell
Of that voice that was drowned in the dash of the stream!
How fain had I followed, and plunged with that scream

Into death, but my being indignantly lagged
Through the brutalized flesh that I painfully dragged
Behind me · — "O, Circe! O, mother of spite!
Speak the last of that curse! and imprison me quite
In the husk of a brute,— that no pity may name
The man that I was,— that no kindred may claim
The monster I am! Let me utterly be
Brute-buried, and Nature's dishonor with me
Uninscribed!" — But she listened my prayer, that was praise
To her malice, with smiles, and advised me to gaze
On the river for love,— and perchance she would make
In pity a maid without eyes for my sake,
And she left me like Scorn. Then I asked of the wave
What monster I was; and it trembled and gave
The true shape of my grief, and I turned with my face
From all waters forever, and fled through that place,
Till with horror more strong than all magic I passed
Its bounds, and the world was before me at last.

There I wandered in sorrow, and shunned the abodes
Of men, that stood up in the likeness of gods,
But I saw from afar the warm shine of the sun
On their cities, where man was a million, not one;
And I saw the white smoke of their altars ascending,
That showed where the hearts of the many were blending,
And the wind in my face brought shrill voices that came
From the trumpets that gathered whole bands in one fame
As a chorus of man,— and they streamed from the gates
Like a dusky libation poured out to the Fates.
But at times there were gentler processions of peace,
That I watched with my soul in my eyes till their cease

There were women! there men! but to me a third sex
I saw them all dots — yet I loved them as specks:
And oft, to assuage a sad yearning of eyes,
I stole near the city, but stole covert-wise,
Like a wild beast of love, and perchance to be smitten
By some hand that I rather had wept on than bitten!
O, I once had a haunt near a cot where a mother
Daily sat in the shade with her child, and would smother
Its eyelids in kisses, and then in its sleep
Sang dreams in its ear of its manhood, while deep
In a thicket of willows I gazed o'er the brooks
That murmured between us, and kissed them with looks;
But the willows unbosomed their secret, and never
I returned to a spot I had startled forever,
Though I oft longed to know, but could ask it of none,
Was the mother still fair, and how big was her son.

For the haunters of fields they all shunned me by flight,
The men in their horror, the women in fright;
None ever remained save a child once that sported
Among the wild bluebells, and painfully courted
The breeze; and beside him a speckled snake lay
Tight strangled, because it had hissed him away
From the flower at his finger; he rose and drew near
Like a Son of Immortals, one born to no fear,
But with strength of black locks and with eyes azure bright
To grow to large manhood of merciful might.
He came, with his face of bold wonder, to feel
The hair of my side, and to lift up my heel,
And questioned my face with wide eyes; but when under
My lids he saw tears,— for I wept at his wonder,
He stroked me, and uttered such kindliness then,
That the once love of women, the friendship of men

In past sorrow, no kindness e'er came like a kiss
On my heart in its desolate day such as this;
And I yearned at his cheeks in my love, and down bent,
And lifted him up in my arms with intent
To kiss him,— but he, cruel-kindly, alas!
Held out to my lips a plucked handful of grass!
Then I dropt him in horror, but felt as I fled
The stone he indignantly hurled at my head,
That dissevered my ear, but I felt not, whose fate
Was to meet more distress in his love than his hate!

Thus I wandered, companioned of grief and forlorn,
Till I wished for that land where my being was born;
But what was that land with its love, where my home
Was self-shut against me; for why should I come
Like an after-distress to my gray-bearded father,
With a blight to the last of his sight? — let him rather
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn
To his son even such as he left him. O, how
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but now
Like gods to my humbled estate? — or how bear
The steeds once the pride of my eyes and the care
Of my hands? Then I turned me self-banished, and came
Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same
As myself. I have heard how they met by a stream
In games, and were suddenly changed by a scream
That made wretches of many, as she rolled her wild eyes
Against heaven, and so vanished.— The gentle and wise
Lose their thoughts in deep studies, and others their ill
In the mirth of mankind where they mingle them still.

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

Alas! that breathing Vanity should go
Where Pride is buried,— like its very ghost,
Uprisen from the naked bones below,
In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast
Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,
Shedding its chilling superstition most
On young and ignorant natures — as it wont
To haunt the peaceful church-yard of Bedfont!

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,
Behold two maidens, up the quiet green
Shining, far distant, in the summer air
That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between
Their downy plumes,— sailing as if they were
Two far-off ships,— until they brush between
The church-yard's humble walls, and watch and wait
On either side of the wide-opened gate.

And there they stand — with haughty necks before
God's holy house, that points towards the skies —
Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,
And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes:
And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,
Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,
With pouting lips,— forgetful of the grace,
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face; —

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,
May wear the happiness of rich attire;
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,
May change the soul's warm glances for the fire
Of lifeless diamonds; — and for health denied,—
With art, that blushes at itself, inspire
Their languid cheeks — and flourish in a glory
That has no life in life, nor after-story.

The aged priest goes shaking his gray hair
In meekest censuring, and turns his eye
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in prayer,
And sighs, and clasps his hands, and passes by.
Good-hearted man! what sullen soul would wear
Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly
Put on thy censure, that might win the praise
Of one so gray in goodness and in days?

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame
Of this ungodly shine of human pride,
And sadly blends his reverence and blame
In one grave bow, and passes with a stride
Impatient: — many a red-hooded dame
Turns her pained head, but not her glance, aside
From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,
That Heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

"I have a lily in the bloom at home,"
Quoth one, "and by the blessed Sabbath day
I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come
And read a lesson upon vain array; —
And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some
Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say —
Making my reverence,—'Ladies, an you please,
King Solomon 's not half so fine as these.'"

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run
His earthly course,—"Nay, Goody, let your text
Grow in the garden.— We have only one —
Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next?
Summer will come again, and summer sun,
And lilies too,— but I were sorely vext
To mar my garden, and cut short the blow
Of the last lily I may live to grow."

"The last!" quoth she, "and though the last it were —
Lo! those two wantons, where they stand so proud,
With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,
And painted cheeks, like Dagons to be bowed
And curtseyed too! — last Sabbath, after prayer,
I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud
If they were angels — but I made him know
God's bright ones better, with a bitter blow!"

So speaking they pursue the pebbly walk
That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng, —
Hand-coupled urchins in restrainéd talk,
And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,
And posied church-warden with solemn stalk,
And gold-bedizened beadle flames along,
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene;

And blushing maiden, — modestly arrayed
In spotless white,— still conscious of the glass;
And she, the lonely widow, that hath made
A sable covenant with grief,— alas!
She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,
While the poor kindly-hearted, as they pass,
Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress
Her boy,— so rosy! — and so fatherless!

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near
The fair white temple, to the timely call
Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—
Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl,
Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
Of the low porch, and heaven has won them all,
Saving those two, that turn aside and pass,
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

Ah me! to see their silken manors trailed
In purple luxuries — with restless gold,—
Flaunting the grass where widowhood has wailed
In blotted black,— over the heapy mould
Panting wave-wantonly! They never quailed
How the warm vanity abused the cold;
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone:

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,
Shocking the awful presence of the dead;
Where gracious natures would their eyes benight,
Nor wear their being with a lip too red,
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright
Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their tread,
Meting it into steps, with inward breath,
In very pity to bereavéd death.

Now in the church, time-sobered minds resign
To solemn prayer, and the loud chanted hymn, —
With glowing picturings of joys divine
Painting the mist-light where the roof is dim;
But youth looks upward to the window shine,
Warming with rose and purple and the swim
Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains
Of gorgeous light through many-colored panes;

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath
Enrobed his angels,— and with absent eyes
Hearing of heaven, and its directed path,
Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious skies
Clouding with satin,— till the preacher's wrath
Consumes his pity, and he glows, and cries
With a deep voice that trembles in its might,
And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light:

"O, that the vacant eye would learn to look
On very beauty, and the heart embrace
True loveliness, and from this holy book
Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace
Of love indeed! O, that the young soul took
Its virgin passion from the glorious face
Of fair religion, and addressed its strife
To win the riches of eternal life!

"Doth the vain heart love glory that is none,
And the poor excellence of vain attire?
O go, and drown your eyes against the sun,
The visible ruler of the starry quire,
Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,
Dazzling the brain with orbs of living fire;
And the faint soul down darkens into night,
And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

O go, and gaze,— when the low winds of even
Breathe hymns, and Nature's many forests nod
Their gold-crowned heads; and the rich blooms of heaven
Sun-ripened give their blushes up to God;
And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riven
By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod
Of heavenly Moses,— that your thirsty sense
May quench its longings of magnificence!

"Yet suns shall perish — stars shall fade away —
Day into darkness — darkness into death —
Death into silence; the warm light of day,
The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath
Of even — all shall wither and decay,
Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath
The touch of morn — or bubbles of rich dyes
That break and vanish in the aching eyes."

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant shed
Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and pour
Their sin to earth,— and with low drooping head
Receive the solemn blessing, and implore
Its grace — then soberly, with chastened tread,
They meekly press towards the gusty door,
With humbled eyes that go to graze upon
The lowly grass — like him of Babylon.

The lowly grass! — O, water-constant mind!
Fast-ebbing holiness! — soon-fading grace
Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind
Through the low porch had washed it from the face
Forever! — How they lift their eyes to find
Old vanities! — Pride wins the very place
Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now
With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow!

And, lo! with eager looks they seek the way
Of old temptation at the lowly gate;
To feast on feathers, and on vain array,
And painted cheeks, and the rich glistering state
Of jewel-sprinkled locks.— But where are they,
The graceless haughty ones that used to wait
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffened eye? —
None challenge the old homage bending by.

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom
Of rich apparel where it glowed before,—
For vanity has faded all to gloom,
And lofty Pride has stiffened to the core,
For impious Life to tremble at its doom.—
Set for a warning token evermore,
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wondering eyes.

The aged priest goes on each Sabbath morn,
But shakes not sorrow under his gray hair,
The solemn clerk goes lavendered and shorn,
Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair; —
And ancient lips, that puckered up in scorn,
Go smoothly breathing to the house of prayer;
And in the garden-plot, from day to day,
The lily blooms its long white life away.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,
In pride of plume, where plumy Death had trod,
Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,
Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod; —
There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see
Two sombre Peacocks.—— Age, with sapient nod
Marking the spot, still tarries to declare
How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.

THE TWO SWANS.

A FAIRY TALE.

IMMORTAL Imogen, crowned queen above
The lilies of thy sex, vouchsafe to hear
A fairy dream in honor of true love —
True above ills, and frailty, and all fear —
Perchance a shadow of his own career
Whose youth was darkly prisoned and long twined
By serpent-sorrow, till white Love drew near,
And sweetly sang him free, and round his mind
A bright horizon threw, wherein no grief may wind.

I saw a tower builded on a lake,
Mocked by its inverse shadow, dark and deep —
That seemed a still intenser night to make,
Wherein the quiet waters sunk to sleep,—
And, whatsoe'er was prisoned in that keep,
A monstrous Snake was warden: — round and round
In sable ringlets I beheld him creep
Blackest amid black shadows to the ground,
Whilst his enormous head the topmost turret crowned.

From whence he shot fierce light against the stars,
Making the pale moon paler with affright;
And with his ruby eye out-threatened Mars —
That blazed in the mid-heavens, hot and bright

Nor slept, nor winked, but with a steadfast spite
Watched their wan looks and tremblings in the skies;
And, that he might not slumber in the night,
The curtain-lids were plucked from his large eyes,
So he might never drowse, but watch his secret prize.

Prince or princess in dismal durance pent,
Victims of old Enchantment's love or hate,
Their lives must all in painful sighs be spent,
Watching the lonely waters soon and late,
And clouds that pass and leave them to their fate,
Or company their grief with heavy tears:—
Meanwhile that Hope can spy no golden gate
For sweet escapement, but in darksome fears
They weep and pine away as if immortal years.

No gentle bird with gold upon its wing
Will perch upon the grate — the gentle bird
Is safe in leafy dell, and will not bring
Freedom's sweet key-note and commission word
Learned of a fairy's lips, for pity stirred —
Lest while he trembling sings, untimely guest!
Watched by that cruel Snake and darkly heard,
He leave a widow on her lonely nest,
To press in silent grief the darlings of her breast.

No gallant knight, adventurous, in his bark,
Will seek the fruitful perils of the place,
To rouse with dipping oar the waters dark
That bear the serpent-image on their face.
And Love, brave Love! though he attempt the base
Nerved to his loyal death, he may not win
His captive lady from the strict embrace
Of that foul Serpent, clasping her within
His sable folds — like Eve enthralled by the old Sin.

But there is none — no knight in panoply,
Nor Love, intrenched in his strong steely coat:
No little speck — no sail — no helper nigh,
No sign — no whispering — no plash of boat: —
The distant shores show dimly and remote,
Made of a deeper mist,— serene and gray,—
And slow and mute the cloudy shadows float
Over the gloomy wave, and pass away,
Chased by the silver beams that on their marges play.

And bright and silvery the willows sleep
Over the shady verge — no mad winds tease
Their hoary heads; but quietly they weep
There sprinkling leaves — half fountains and half trees:
There lilies be — and fairer than all these,
A solitary Swan her breast of snow
Launches against the wave that seems to freeze
Into a chaste reflection, still below
Twin-shadow of herself wherever she may go.

And forth she paddles in the very noon
Of solemn midnight like an elfin thing,
Charmed into being by the argent moon —
Whose silver light for love of her fair wing
Goes with her in the shade, still worshipping
Her dainty plumage: — all around her grew
A radiant circlet, like a fairy ring;
And all behind, a tiny little clue
Of light, to guide her back across the waters blue.

And sure she is no meaner than a fay,
Redeemed from sleepy death, for beauty's sake,
By old ordainment: — silent as she lay,
Touched by a moonlight wand I saw her wake,

And cut her leafy slough, and so forsake
The verdant prison of her lily peers,
That slept amidst the stars upon the lake —
A breathing shape — restored to human fears,
And new-born love and grief — self-conscious of her tears.

And now she clasps her wings around her heart,
And near that lonely isle begins to glide
Pale as her fears, and ofttimes with a start
Turns her impatient head from side to side
In universal terrors — all too wide
To watch; and often to that marble keep
Upturns her pearly eyes, as if she spied
Some foe, and crouches in the shadows steep
That in the gloomy wave go diving fathoms deep.

And well she may, to spy that fearful thing
All down the dusky walls in circlets wound!
Alas! for what rare prize, with many a ring
Girding the marble casket round and round?
His folded tail, lost in the gloom profound,
Terribly darkeneth the rocky base;
But on the top his monstrous head is crowned
With prickly spears, and on his doubtful face
Gleam his unwearied eyes, red watchers of the place.

Alas! of the hot fires that nightly fall,
No one will scorch him in those orbs of spite,
So he may never see beneath the wall
That timid little creature, all too bright,
That stretches her fair neck, slender and white,
Invoking the pale moon, and vainly tries
Her throbbing throat, as if to charm the night
With song — but, hush — it perishes in sighs,
And there will be no dirge, sad swelling though she dies!

She droops — she sinks — she leans upon the lake,
Fainting again into a lifeless flower;
But soon the chilly springs anoint and wake
Her spirit from its death, and with new power
She sheds her stifled sorrows in a shower
Of tender song, timed to her falling tears —
That wins the shady summit of that tower,
And, trembling all the sweeter for its fears,
Fills with imploring moan that cruel monster's ears.

And, lo! the scaly beast is all deprest,
Subdued like Argus by the might of sound —
What time Apollo his sweet lute addrest
To magic converse with the air, and bound
The many monster eyes, all slumber-drowned: —
So on the turret-top that watchful snake
Pillows his giant head, and lists profound,
As if his wrathful spite would never wake,
Charmed into sudden sleep for Love and Beauty's sake

His prickly crest lies prone upon his crown,
And thirsty lip from lip disparted flies,
To drink that dainty flood of music down —
His scaly throat is big with pent-up sighs —
And whilst his hollow ear entrancéd lies,
His looks for envy of the charmed sense
Are fain to listen, till his steadfast eyes,
Stung into pain by their own impotence,
Distil enormous tears into the lake immense.

O, tuneful Swan! O, melancholy bird!
Sweet was that midnight miracle of song,
Rich with ripe sorrow, needful of no word
To tell of pain, and love, and love's deep wrong —

Hinting a piteous tale — perchance how long
Thy unknown tears were mingled with the lake,
What time disguised thy leafy mates among —
And no eye knew what human love and ache
Dwelt in those dewy leaves, and heart so nigh to break.

Therefore no poet will ungently touch
The water-lily, on whose eyelids dew
Trembles like tears; but ever hold it such
As human pain may wander through and through,
Turning the pale leaf paler in its hue —
Wherein life dwells, transfigured, not entombed,
By magic spells. Alas! who ever knew
Sorrow in all its shapes, leafy and plumed,
Or in gross husks of brutes eternally inhumed?

And now the wingéd song has scaled the height
Of that dark dwelling, builded for despair,
And soon a little casement flashing bright
Widens self-opened into the cool air —
That music like a bird may enter there
And soothe the captive in his stony cage;
For there is naught of grief, or painful care,
But plaintive song may happily engage
From sense of its own ill, and tenderly assuage.

And forth into the light, small and remote,
A creature, like the fair son of a king,
Draws to the lattice in his jewelled coat
Against the silver moonlight glistening,
And leans upon his white hand listening
To that sweet music that with tenderer tone
Salutes him, wondering what kindly thing
Is come to soothe him with so tuneful moan,
Singing beneath the walls as if for him alone!

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And while he listens, the mysterious song,
Woven with timid particles of speech,
Twines into passionate words that grieve along
The melancholy notes, and softly teach
The secrets of true love,— that trembling reach
His earnest ear, and through the shadows dun
He missions like replies, and each to each
Their silver voices mingle into one,
Like blended streams that make one music as they run

"Ah! Love, my hope is swooning in my heart,—
Ay, sweet, my cage is strong and hung full high —
Alas! our lips are held so far apart,
Thy words come faint, they have so far to fly! —
If I may only shun that serpent eye,—
Ah me! that serpent eye doth never sleep; —
Then, nearer thee, Love's martyr, I will die! —
Alas, alas! that word has made me weep!
For Pity's sake remain safe in thy marble keep!

"My marble keep! it is my marble tomb —
Nay, sweet! but thou hast there thy living breath—
Aye to expend in sighs for this hard doom; —
But I will come to thee and sing beneath,
And nightly so beguile this serpent wreath; —
Nay, I will find a path from these despairs.
Ah, needs then thou must tread the back of death.
Making his stony ribs thy stony stairs.—
Behold his ruby eye, how fearfully it glares!"

Full sudden at these words the princely youth
Leaps on the scaly back that slumbers, still
Unconscious of his foot, yet not for ruth,
But numbed to dulness by the fairy skill

Of that sweet music, (all more wild and shrill
For intense fear,) that charmed him as he lay —
Meanwhile the lover nerves his desperate will,
Held some short throbs by natural dismay,
Then down, down the serpent-track begins his darksome way.

Now dimly seen — now toiling out of sight,
Eclipsed and covered by the envious wall:
Now fair and spangled in the sudden light,
And clinging with wide arms for fear of fall;
Now dark and sheltered by a kindly pall
Of dusky shadow from his wakeful foe;
Slowly he winds adown — dimly and small,
Watched by the gentle swan that sings below,
Her hope increasing, still, the larger he doth grow.

But nine times nine the serpent folds embrace
The marble walls about — which he must tread
Before his anxious foot may touch the base:
Long is the dreary path, and must be sped!
But Love, that holds the mastery of dread,
Braces his spirit, and with constant toil
He wins his way, and now, with arms outspread,
Impatient plunges from the last long coil:
So may all gentle Love ungentle Malice foil.

The song is hushed, the charm is all complete,
And two fair Swans are swimming on the lake:
But scarce their tender bills have time to meet,
When fiercely drops adown that cruel Snake —
His steely scales a fearful rustling make,
Like autumn leaves that tremble and foretell
The sable storm; — the plumy lovers quake —
And feel the troubled waters pant and swell,
Heaved by the giant bulk of their pursuer fell.

His jaws, wide yawning like the gates of Death,
Hiss horrible pursuit — his red eyes glare
The waters into blood — his eager breath
Grows hot upon their plumes: — now, minstrel fair!
She drops her ring into the waves, and there
It widens all around, a fairy ring
Wrought of the silver light — the fearful pair
Swim in the very midst, and pant and cling
The closer for their fears, and tremble wing to wing.

Bending their course over the pale gray lake,
Against the pallid East, wherein light played
In tender flushes, still the baffled Snake
Circled them round continually, and bayed
Hoarsely and loud, forbidden to invade
The sanctuary ring — his sable mail
Rolled darkly through the flood, and writhed and made
A shining track over the waters pale,
Lashed into boiling foam by his enormous tail.

And so they sailed into the distance dim,
Into the very distance — small and white,
Like snowy blossoms of the spring that swim
Over the brooklets — followed by the spite
Of that huge Serpent, that with wild affright
Worried them on their course, and sore annoy,
Till on the grassy marge I saw them 'light,
And change, anon, a gentle girl and boy,
Locked in embrace of sweet unutterable joy!

Then came the Morn, and with her pearly showers
Wept on them, like a mother, in whose eyes
Tears are no grief; and from his rosy bowers
The Oriental sun began to rise,

Chasing the darksome shadows from the skies;
Wherewith that sable Serpent far away
Fled, like a part of night — delicious sighs
From waking bosoms purified the day.
And little birds were singing sweetly from each spray.

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM

'T was in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school:
There were some that ran, and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,
And souls untouched by sin;
To a level mead they came, and there
They drave the wickets in:
Pleasantly shone the setting sun
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran,—
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can;
But the Usher sat remote from all,
A melancholy man!

His hat was off, his vest apart,
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;
For a burning thought was in his brow,
And his bosom ill at ease:
So he leaned his head on his hands, and read
The book between his knees!

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,
Nor ever glanced aside,
For the peace of his soul he read that book
In the golden eventide:
Much study had made him very lean,
And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,
With a fast and fervent grasp
He strained the dusky covers close,
And fixed the brazen hasp:
"O, God! could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,
Some moody turns he took,—
Now up the mead, then down the mead,
And past a shady nook,—
And, lo! he saw a little boy
That pored upon a book!

"My gentle lad, what is't you read—
Romance or fairy fable?
Or is it some historic page,
Of kings and crowns unstable?"
The young boy gave an upward glance,—
"It is 'The Death of Abel.'"

The Usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain,—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again;
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talked with him of Cain;

And, long since then, of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves;
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves;
Of horrid stabs in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod,—
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial clod;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God!

He told how murderers walk the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain,—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain:
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain!

"And well," quoth he, "I know, for truth,
Their pangs must be extreme,—
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—
Who spill life's sacred stream!
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought
A murder, in a dream!

"One that had never done me wrong—
A feeble man and old;
I led him to a lonely field,—
The moon shone clear and cold:
Now here, said I, this man shall die,
And I will have his gold!

"Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—
And then the deed was done:
There was nothing lying at my foot
But lifeless flesh and bone!

"Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill;
And yet I feared him all the more,
For lying there so still:
There was a manhood in his look,
That murder could not kill!

"And, lo! the universal air
Seemed lit with ghastly flame;—
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame:
I took the dead man by his hand,
And called upon his name!

"O, God! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain!
But when I touched the lifeless clay,
The blood gushed out amain!
For every clot, a burning spot
Was scorching in my brain!

"My head was like an ardent coal,
My heart as solid ice;
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,
Was at the devil's price:
A dozen times I groaned; the dead
Had never groaned but twice!

"And now, from forth the frowning sky,
From the heaven's topmost height,
I heard a voice — the awful voice
Of the blood-avenging sprite: —
'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead
And hide it from my sight!'

'I took the dreary body up,
And cast it in a stream,—
A sluggish water, black as ink,
The depth was so extreme:—
My gentle Boy, remember this
Is nothing but a dream!

"Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,
And vanished in the pool;
Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,
And washed my forehead cool,
And sat among the urchins young,
That evening, in the school.

"O, Heaven! to think of their white souls,
And mine so black and grim!
I could not share in childish prayer,
Nor join in evening hymn:
Like a devil of the pit I seemed,
'Mid holy cherubim!

"And peace went with them, one and all,
And each calm pillow spread;
But Guilt was my grim chamberlain
That lighted me to bed;
And drew my midnight curtains round,
With fingers bloody red!

"All night I lay in agony,
In anguish dark and deep;
My fevered eyes I dared not close,
But stared aghast at Sleep:
For Sin had rendered unto her
The keys of hell to keep!

"All night I lay in agony,
From weary chime to chime,
With one besetting horrid hint,
That racked me all the time;
A mighty yearning, like the first
Fierce impulse unto crime!

"One stern tyrannic thought, that made
All other thoughts its slave;
Stronger and stronger every pulse
Did that temptation crave,—
Still urging me to go and see
The Dead Man in his grave!

"Heavily I rose up, as soon
As light was in the sky,
And sought the black accurséd pool
With a wild misgiving eye;
And I saw the Dead in the river bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.

"Merrily rose the lark, and shook
The dew-drop from its wing;
But I never marked its morning flight,
I never heard it sing:
For I was stooping once again
Under the horrid thing.

"With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
I took him up and ran; —
There was no time to dig a grave
Before the day began:
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
I hid the murdered man!

"And all that day I read in school,
But my thought was other where;
As soon as the mid-day task was done,
In secret I was there:
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
And still the corse was bare!

"Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
That earth refused to keep:
Or land or sea, though he should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

"So wills the fierce avenging Sprite,
Till blood for blood atones!
Ay, though he 's buried in a cave,
And trodden down with stones,
And years have rotted off his flesh,—
The world shall see his bones!

"O, God! that horrid, horrid dream
Besets me now awake!
Again — again, with dizzy brain,
The human life I take;
And my red right hand grows raging hot,
Like Cranmer's at the stake

"And still no peace for the restless clay
Will wave or mould allow;
The horrid thing pursues my soul,—
It stands before me now!"
The fearful Boy looked up, and saw
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep
The urchin eyelids kissed,
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
Through the cold and heavy mist:
And Eugene Aram walked between,
With gyves upon his wrist.

THE ELM TREE:

A DREAM IN THE WOODS.

"And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees." AS YOU LIKE IT.

'T WAS in a shady avenue,
Where lofty elms abound—
And from a tree
There came to me
A sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmured overhead,
And sometimes underground.

Amongst the leaves it seemed to sigh,
Amid the boughs to moan;
It muttered in the stem, and then
The roots took up the tone;
As if beneath the dewy grass
The dead began to groan.

No breeze there was to stir the leaves;
No bolts that tempests launch,
To rend the trunk or rugged bark;
No gale to bend the branch;
No quake of earth to heave the roots,
That stood so stiff and stanch.

No bird was preening up aloft,
To rustle with its wing;
No squirrel, in its sport or fear,
From bough to bough to spring;
The solid bole
Had ne'er a hole
To hide a living thing!

No scooping hollow cell to lodge
A furtive beast or fowl,
The martin, bat,
Or forest cat
That nightly loves to prowl,
Nor ivy nook so apt to shroud
The moping, snoring owl.

But still the sound was in my ear,
A sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmured overhead,
And sometimes underground —
'T was in a shady avenue
Where lofty elms abound.

O, hath the Dryad still a tongue
In this ungenial clime?
Have sylvan spirits still a voice
As in the classic prime —
To make the forest voluble,
As in the olden time?

The olden time is dead and gone;
Its years have filled their sum —
And even in Greece — her native Greece —
The sylvan nymph is dumb —
From ash, and beech, and aged oak,
No classic whispers come.

From poplar, pine, and drooping birch,
And fragrant linden trees;
No living sound
E'er hovers round,
Unless the vagrant breeze,
The music of the merry bird,
Or hum of busy bees.

But busy bees forsake the elm
That bears no bloom aloft —
The finch was in the hawthorn-bush,
The blackbird in the croft;
And among the firs the brooding dove
That else might murmur soft.

Yet still I heard that solemn sound,
And sad it was to boot,
From every overhanging bough,
And each minuter shoot;
From rugged trunk and mossy rind,
And from the twisted root.

From these,— a melancholy moan;
From those,— a dreary sigh;
As if the boughs were wintry bare,
And wild winds sweeping by —
Whereas the smallest fleecy cloud
Was steadfast in the sky.

No sign or touch of stirring air
Could either sense observe —
The zephyr had not breath enough
The thistle-down to swerve,
Or force the filmy gossamers
To take another curve.

In still and silent slumber hushed
All Nature seemed to be:
From heaven above, or earth beneath,
No whisper came to me —
Except the solemn sound and sad
From that MYSTERIOUS TREE!

A hollow, hollow, hollow sound,
As is that dreamy roar
When distant billows boil and bound
Along a shingly shore —
But the ocean brim was far aloof,
A hundred miles or more.

No murmur of the gusty sea,
No tumult of the beach,
However they may foam and fret,
The bounded sense could reach —
Methought the trees in mystic tongue
Were talking each to each! —

Mayhap, rehearsing ancient tales
Of greenwood love or guilt,
Of whispered vows
Beneath their boughs;
Or blood obscurely spilt;
Or of that near-hand mansion-house
A royal Tudor built.

Perchance, of booty won or shared
Beneath the starry cope —
Or where the suicidal wretch
Hung up the fatal rope;
Or Beauty kept an evil tryste,
Ensnared by Love and Hope.

Of graves, perchance, untimely scooped
At midnight dark and dank —
And what is underneath the sod
Whereon the grass is rank —
Of old intrigues,
And privy leagues,
Tradition leaves in blank.

Of traitor lips that muttered plots —
Of kin who fought and fell —
God knows the undiscovered schemes,
The arts and acts of hell,
Performed long generations since,
If trees had tongues to tell!

With wary eyes, and ears alert,
As one who walks afraid,
I wandered down the dappled path
Of mingled light and shade —
How sweetly gleamed that arch of blue
Beyond the green arcade!

How cheerly shone the glimpse of heaven
Beyond that verdant aisle!
All overarched with lofty elms,
That quenched the light, the while,
As dim and chill
As serves to fill
Some old cathedral pile!

And many a gnarléd trunk was there,
That ages long had stood,
Till Time had wrought them into shapes
Like Pan's fantastic brood;
Or still more foul and hideous forms
That pagans carve in wood!

A crouching Satyr lurking here —
And there a Goblin grim —
As staring full of demon life
As Gothic sculptor's whim —
A marvel it had scarcely been
To hear a voice from him !

Some whisper from that horrid mouth
Of strange, unearthly tone ;
Or wild infernal laugh, to chill
One's marrow in the bone.
But no —— it grins like rigid Death,
And silent as a stone !

As silent as its fellows be,
For all is mute with them —
The branch that climbs the leafy roof —
The rough and mossy stem —
The crooked root,
And tender shoot,
Where hangs the dewy gem.

One mystic tree alone there is,
Of sad and solemn sound —
That sometimes murmurs overhead,
And sometimes underground —
In all that shady avenue,
Where lofty elms abound.

PART II.

The scene is changed ! No green arcade,
No trees all ranged a-row —

But scattered like a beaten host,
Dispersing to and fro;
With here and there a sylvan corse,
That fell before the foe.

The foe that down in yonder dell
Pursues his daily toil;
As witness many a prostrate trunk,
Bereft of leafy spoil,
Hard by its wooden stump, whereon
The adder loves to coil.

Alone he works — his ringing blows
Have banished bird and beast;
The hind and fawn have cantered off
A hundred yards at least;
And on the maple's lofty top
The linnet's song has ceased.

No eye his labor overlooks,
Or when he takes his rest;
Except the timid thrush that peeps
Above her secret nest,
Forbid by love to leave the young
Beneath her speckled breast.

The woodman's heart is in his work
His axe is sharp and good:
With sturdy arm and steady aim
He smites the gaping wood;
From distant rocks
His lusty knocks
Reëcho many a rood.

His axe is keen, his arm is strong;
The muscles serve him well;
His years have reached an extra span,
The number none can tell;
But still his life-long task has been
The timber tree to fell.

Through summer's parching sultriness,
And winter's freezing cold.
From sapling youth
To virile growth,
And age's rigid mould,
His energetic axe hath rung
Within that forest old.

Aloft, upon his poising steel
The vivid sunbeams glance —
About his head and round his feet
The forest shadows dance;
And bounding from his russet coat
The acorn drops askance.

His face is like a Druid's face,
With wrinkles furrowed deep,
And tanned by scorching suns as brown
As corn that 's ripe to reap;
But the hair on brow, and cheek, and chin,
Is white as wool of sheep.

His frame is like a giant's frame;
His legs are long and stark;
His arms like limbs of knotted yew;
His hands like rugged bark;
So he felleth still
With right good will,
As if to build an ark!

O ! well within *his* fatal path
The fearful tree might quake
Through every fibre, twig, and leaf,
With aspen tremor shake ;
Through trunk and root.
And branch and shoot,
A low complaining make !

O ! well to *him* the tree might breathe
A sad and solemn sound,
A sigh that murmured overhead,
And groans from underground ;
As in that shady avenue
Where lofty elms abound !

But calm and mute the maple stands,
The plane, the ash, the fir,
The elm, the beech, the drooping birch,
Without the least demur ;
And e'en the aspen's hoary leaf
Makes no unusual stir.

The pines — those old gigantic pines,
That writhe — recalling soon
The famous human group that writhes
With snakes in wild festoon —
In ramous wrestlings interlaced
A forest Laöcoon —

Like Titans of primeval girth
By tortures overcome,
Their brown enormous limbs they twine,
Bedewed with tears of gum —
Fierce agonies that ought to yell,
But, like the marble, dumb

Nay, yonder blasted elm that stands
So like a man of sin,
Who, frantic, flings his arms abroad
To feel the worm within —
For all that gesture, so intense,
It makes no sort of din!

An universal silence reigns
In rugged bark or peel,
Except that very trunk which rings
Beneath the biting steel —
Meanwhile the woodman plies his axe
With unrelenting zeal!

No rustic song is on his tongue,
No whistle on his lips;
But with a quiet thoughtfulness
His trusty tool he grips,
And, stroke on stroke, keeps hacking out
The bright and flying chips.

Stroke after stroke, with frequent dint
He spreads the fatal gash;
Till, lo! the remnant fibres rend,
With harsh and sudden crash,
And on the dull-resounding turf
The jarring branches lash!

O! now the forest trees may sigh,
The ash, the poplar tall,
The elm, the birch, the drooping beech,
The aspens — one and all,
With solemn groan
And hollow moan
Lament a comrade's fall!

A goodly elm, of noble girth,
That, thrice the human span —
While on their variegated course
The constant seasons ran —
Through gale, and hail, and fiery bolt,
Had stood erect as man.

But now, like mortal man himself,
Struck down by hand of God,
Or heathen idol tumbled prone
Beneath the Eternal's nod,
In all its giant bulk and length
It lies along the sod!

Ay, now the forest trees may grieve
And make a common moan
Around that patriarchal trunk
So newly overthrown;
And with a murmur recognize
A doom to be their own!

The echo sleeps: the idle axe,
A disregarded tool,
Lies crushing with its passive weight
The toad's reputed stool —
The woodman wipes his dewy brow
Within the shadows cool.

No zephyr stirs: the ear may catch
The smallest insect-hum;
But on the disappointed sense
No mystic whispers come;
No tone of sylvan sympathy,
The forest trees are dumb

No leafy noise, nor inward voice,
  No sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmurs overhead,
  And sometimes underground;
As in that shady avenue,
  Where lofty elms abound!

PART III.

The deed is done: the tree is low
  That stood so long and firm;
The woodman and his axe are gone,
  His toil has found its term;
And where he wrought the speckled thrush
  Securely hunts the worm.

The cony from the sandy bank
  Has run a rapid race,
Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern,
  To seek the open space;
And on its haunches sits erect
  To clean its furry face.

The dappled fawn is close at hand,
  The hind is browsing near,—
And on the larch's lowest bough
  The ousel whistles clear;
    But checks the note
    Within its throat,
  As choked with sudden fear!

With sudden fear her wormy quest
The thrush abruptly quits —
Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern
The startled cony flits;
And on the larch's lowest bough
No more the ousel sits.

With sudden fear
The dappled deer
Effect a swift escape;
But well might bolder creatures start,
And fly, or stand agape,
With rising hair and curdled blood,
To see so grim a Shape!

The very sky turns pale above;
The earth grows dark beneath;
The human terror thrills with cold,
And draws a shorter breath —
An universal panic owns
The dread approach of DEATH!

With silent pace, as shadows come,
And dark as shadows be,
The grisly phantom takes his stand
Beside the fallen tree,
And scans it with his gloomy eyes,
And laughs with horrid glee

A dreary laugh and desolate,
Where mirth is void and null,
As hollow as its echo sounds
Within the hollow skull —
"Whoever laid this tree along,
His hatchet was not dull!

"The human arm and human tool
Have done their duty well!
But after sound of ringing axe
Must sound the ringing knell
When elm or oak
Have felt the stroke
My turn it is to fell!

"No passive unregarded tree,
A senseless thing of wood,
Wherein the sluggish sap ascends
To swell the vernal bud —
But conscious, moving, breathing trunks
That throb with living blood!

"No forest monarch yearly clad
In mantle green or brown;
That unrecorded lives, and falls
By hand of rustic clown —
But kings who don the purple robe,
And wear the jewelled crown.

"Ah! little recks the royal mind,
Within his banquet-hall,
While tapers shine and music breathes
And beauty leads the ball,—
He little recks the oaken plank
Shall be his palace wall!

"Ah, little dreams the haughty peer,
The while his falcon flies —
Or on the blood-bedabbled turf
The antlered quarry dies —
That in his own ancestral park
The narrow dwelling lies

"But haughty peer and mighty king
One doom shall overwhelm!
The oaken cell
Shall lodge him well
Whose sceptre ruled a realm —
While he who never knew a home
Shall find it in the elm!

"The tattered, lean, dejected wretch,
Who begs from door to door,
And dies within the cressy ditch,
Or on the barren moor,
The friendly elm shall lodge and clothe
That houseless man and poor!

"Yea, this recumbent rugged trunk,
That lies so long and prone,
With many a fallen acorn-cup,
And mast and firry cone —
This rugged trunk shall hold its share
Of mortal flesh and bone!

"A miser hoarding heaps of gold,
But pale with ague-fears —
A wife lamenting love's decay,
With secret cruel tears,
Distilling bitter, bitter drops
From sweets of former years —

"A man within whose gloomy mind
Offence had darkly sunk,
Who out of fierce Revenge's cup
Hath madly, darkly drunk —
Grief, Avarice, and Hate shall sleep
Within this very trunk!

"This massy trunk that lies along,
And many more must fall —
For the very knave
Who digs the grave,
The man who spreads the pall,
And he who tolls the funeral bell,
The elm shall have them all!

"The tall abounding elm that grows
In hedge-rows up and down:
In field and forest, copse and park,
And in the peopled town,
With colonies of noisy rooks
That nestle on its crown.

"And well the abounding elm may grow
In field and hedge so rife,
In forest, copse, and wooded park,
And 'mid the city's strife,
For, every hour that passes by
Shall end a human life!"

The phantom ends: the shade is gone;
The sky is clear and bright;
On turf, and moss, and fallen tree,
There glows a ruddy light;
And bounding through the golden fern
The rabbit comes to bite.

The thrush's mate beside her sits
And pipes a merry lay;
The dove is in the evergreens;
And on the larch's spray
The fly-bird flutters up and down,
To catch its tiny prey.

The gentle hind and dappled fawn
  Are coming up the glade;
Each harmless furred and feathered thing
  Is glad, and not afraid —
But on my saddened spirit still
  The shadow leaves a shade.

A secret, vague, prophetic gloom,
  As though by certain mark
I knew the fore-appointed tree,
  Within whose rugged bark
This warm and living frame shall find
  Its narrow house and dark.

That mystic tree which breathed to me
  A sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmured overhead,
  And sometimes underground;
Within that shady avenue
  Where lofty elms abound.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

A ROMANCE.

"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old,
But something ails it now: the place is curst."
HART-LEAP WELL, BY WORDSWORTH.

PART I.

SOME dreams we have are nothing else but dreams,
Unnatural and full of contradictions;
Yet others of our most romantic schemes
Are something more than fictions.

It might be only on enchanted ground;
It might be merely by a thought's expansion;
But in the spirit, or the flesh, I found
An old deserted mansion.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
A dwelling-place,— and yet no habitation;
A house,— but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication.

Unhinged the iron gates half open hung,
Jarred by the gusty gales of many winters,
That from its crumbled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters.

No dog was at the threshold, great or small;
No pigeon on the roof — no household creature —
No cat demurely dozing on the wall —
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirred, to go or come;
No face looked forth from shut or open casement:
No chimney smoked — there was no sign of home
From parapet to basement.

With shattered panes the grassy court was starred;
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after;
And through the ragged roof the sky shone, barred
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

The flower grew wild and rankly as the weed,
Roses with thistles struggled for espial,
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed
Had overgrown the dial.

But, gay or gloomy, steadfast or infirm,
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration;
All times and tides were lost in one long term
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the porch, she found
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough;
And on the lawn,— within its turfy mound,—
The rabbit made his burrow.

The rabbit wild and gray, that flitted through
The shrubby clumps, and frisked, and sat, and vanished,
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew
His enemy was banished.

The wary crow,— the pheasant from the woods, —
Lulled by the still and everlasting sameness,
Close to the mansion, like domestic broods,
Fed with a "shocking tameness."

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, alighted.

The moping heron, motionless and stiff,
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard, except, from far away,
The ringing of the whitwall's shrilly laughter,
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,
That Echo murmured after.

But Echo never mocked the human tongue;
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,
A secret curse on that old building hung,
And its deserted garden.

The beds were all untouched by hand or tool;
No footstep marked the damp and mossy gravel,
Each walk as green as is the mantled pool
For want of human travel.

The vine unpruned, and the neglected peach,
Drooped from the wall with which they used to grapple,
And on the cankered tree, in easy reach,
Rotted the golden apple.

But awfully the truant shunned the ground,
The vagrant kept aloof, and daring poacher:
In spite of gaps that through the fences round
Invited the encroacher.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

The pear and quince lay squandered on the grass;
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of bloomy plums — a wilderness it was
Of fruits, and weeds, and flowers!

The marigold amidst the nettles blew,
The gourd embraced the rose-bush in its ramble,
The thistle and the stock together grew,
The hollyhock and bramble.

The bear-bine with the lilac interlaced;
The sturdy burdock choked its slender neighbor,
The spicy pink. All tokens were effaced
Of human care and labor.

The very yew formality had trained
To such a rigid pyramidal stature,
For want of trimming had almost regained
The raggedness of nature.

The fountain was a-dry — neglect and time
Had marred the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,
Sprawled in the ruined basin.

The statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves, and herbage rotten,
Lay like the idol of some bygone race.
Its name and rites forgotten.

On every side the aspect was the same,
All ruined, desolate, forlorn and savage:
No hand or foot within the precinct came
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

PART II.

O, very gloomy is the house of woe,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That Death is in the dwelling!

O, very, very dreary is the room
Where love, domestic love, no longer nestles,
But, smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The corpse lies on the trestles!

But house of woe, and hearse, and sable pall,
The narrow home of the departed mortal,
Ne'er looked so gloomy as that ghostly hall,
With its deserted portal!

The centipede along the threshold crept,
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,
And in its winding-sheet the maggot slept,
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood;
The emmets of the steps had old possession,
And marched in search of their diurnal food
In undisturbed procession.

As undisturbed as the prehensile cell
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue;
For never foot upon that threshold fell,
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

Howbeit, the door I pushed — or so I dreamed
Which slowly, slowly gaped,— the hinges creaking
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dumb within that mansion old,
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners
That hung from the corroded walls, and told
Of former men and manners.

Those tattered flags, that with the opened door
Seemed the old wave of battle to remember,
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out — bird after bird —
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter!

A shriek that echoed from the joisted roof,
And up the stair, and further still and further,
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof
It ceased its tale of murther!

Meanwhile the rusty armor rattled round,
The banner shuddered, and the ragged streamer;
All things the horrid tenor of the sound
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers, where the helmet hung and belt,
Stirred as the tempest stirs the forest branches,
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt
The bloodhound at his haunches.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,
And through its many gaps of destitution
Dolorous moans and hollow sighings came,
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball,
Touched by some impulse occult or mechanic;
And nameless beetles ran along the wall
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that from overhead
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,
Suddenly turned, and up its slender thread
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall,
Assuming features solemn and terrific,
Hinted some tragedy of that old hall,
Locked up in hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the doubt,
Wherefore amongst those flags so dull and livid
The banner of the BLOODY HAND shone out,
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal,
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver,
And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel
So ague-like a shiver.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

If but a rat had lingered in the house,
To lure the thought into a social channel!
But not a rat remained, or tiny mouse,
To squeak behind the panel.

Huge drops rolled down the walls, as if they wept;
And where the cricket used to chirp so shrilly
The toad was squatting, and the lizard crept
On that damp hearth and chilly.

For years no cheerful blaze had sparkled there,
Or glanced on coat of buff or knightly metal;
The slug was crawling on the vacant chair,—
The snail upon the settle.

The floor was redolent of mould and must,
The fungus in the rotten seams had quickened;
While on the oaken table coats of dust
Perennially had thickened.

No mark of leathern jack or metal cann,
No cup — no horn — no hospitable token,—
All social ties between that board and man
Had long ago been broken.

There was so foul a rumor in the air,
The shadow of a presence so atrocious,
No human creature could have feasted there,
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

PART III.

'T is hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason or from impulse only —
But some internal prompting bade me mount
The gloomy stairs and lonely.

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp, and cold,
With odors as from bones and relics carnal,
Deprived of rite, and consecrated mould,
The chapel vault, or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress
Of every step so many echoes blended,
The mind, with dark misgivings, feared to guess
How many feet ascended.

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,
As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,
With leaves that rankly rotted.

The air was thick — and in the upper gloom
The bat — or something in its shape — was winging;
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb,
The death's-head moth was clinging.

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly;
And with a grim significance flits round
The taper burning bluely.

Such omens in the place there seemed to be,
At every crooked turn, or on the landing,
The straining eyeball was prepared to see
Some apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

Yet no portentous shape the sight amazed;
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid;
But from their tarnished frames dark figures gazed,
And faces spectre-pallid.

Not merely with the mimic life that lies
Within the compass of art's simulation;
Their souls were looking through their painted eyes
With awful speculation.

On every lip a speechless horror dwelt;
On every brow the burthen of affliction;
The old ancestral spirits knew and felt
The house's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,
They might have stirred, or sighed, or wept, or spoken,
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,
Except my steps in solitary clamber,
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,
From chamber into chamber.

Deserted rooms of luxury and state,
That old magnificence had richly furnished
With pictures, cabinets of ancient date,
And carvings gilt and burnished.

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art,
With Scripture history, or classic fable;
But all had faded, save one ragged part,
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth
Had marred the tissue with a partial ravage;
But undecaying frowned upon the cloth
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale; the cloud a thing of doubt;
Some hues were fresh, and some decayed and duller;
But still the BLOODY HAND shone strangely out
With vehemence of color!

The BLOODY HAND that with a lurid stain
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,
Projected from the casement's painted pane,
Where all beside was broken.

The BLOODY HAND significant of crime,
That, glaring on the old heraldic banner,
Had kept its crimson unimpaired by time,
In such a wondrous manner!

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

The death-watch ticked behind the panelled oak,
Inexplicable tremors shook the arras,
And echoes strange and mystical awoke,
The fancy to embarrass.

Prophetic hints that filled the soul with dread,
But through one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,
The while some secret inspiration said,
That chamber is the ghostly!

Across the door no gossamer festoon
Swung pendulous — no web — no dusty fringes,
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunned the interdicted room,
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banished,
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom
The very midge had vanished.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a bed,
As if with awful aim direct and certain,
To show the BLOODY HAND in burning red
Embroidered on the curtain.

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt —
The pillow in its place had slowly rotted;
The floor alone retained the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence
With mazy doubles to the grated casement —
O, what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement!

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance?
Had sought the door, the window, in his flight,
Striving for dear existence?

What shricking spirit in that bloody room
Its mortal frame had violently quitted? —
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,
A ghostly shadow flitted.

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,
But painted on the air so very dimly,
It hardly veiled the tapestry at all,
Or portrait frowning grimly.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear:
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

"Drowned! drowned!"—HAMLET.

ONE more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family —
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
O, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly

Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled —
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it — think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it.
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;

Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth, and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread —
    Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
  And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
  And work — work — work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It 's O! to be a slave
  Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
  If this is Christian work!

"Work — work — work
Till the brain begins to swim!
  Work — work — work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
  Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
  And sew them on in a dream!

"O, men, with sisters dear!
O, men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you 're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch — stitch — stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt.

"But why do I talk of death?
That phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own —
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
O, God! that bread should be so dear.
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work — work — work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread — and rags.
That shattered roof — and this naked floor —
A table — a broken chair —
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work — work — work!
From weary chime to chime,
Work — work — work,
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

"Work — work — work,
In the dull December light,
And work — work — work,
When the weather is warm and bright —
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs,
And twit me with the spring.

"O! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet —
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want,
And the walk that costs a meal!

"O! but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for love or hope,
But only time for grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread —
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the rich! —
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

THE LADY'S DREAM.

THE lady lay in her bed,
  Her couch so warm and soft,
But her sleep was restless and broken still;
  For, turning often and oft
From side to side, she muttered and moaned,
  And tossed her arms aloft.

At last she startled up,
  And gazed on the vacant air,
With a look of awe, as if she saw
  Some dreadful phantom there —
And then in the pillow she buried her face
  From visions ill to bear.

The very curtain shook,
  Her terror was so extreme;
And the light that fell on the broidered quilt
  Kept a tremulous gleam;
And her voice was hollow, and shook as she cried:
  "O, me! that awful dream!

"That weary, weary walk,
  In the church-yard's dismal ground!
And those horrible things, with shady wings,
  That came and flitted round,—
Death, death, and nothing but death,
  In every sight and sound!

"And, O! those maidens young,
Who wrought in that dreary room,
With figures drooping and spectres thin,
And cheeks without a bloom; —
And the voice that cried, 'For the pomp of pride,
We haste to an early tomb!

"'For the pomp and pleasure of pride,
We toil like Afric slaves,
And only to earn a home, at last,
Where yonder cypress waves,'
And then they pointed — I never saw
A ground so full of graves!

"And still the coffins came,
With their sorrowful trains and slow;
Coffin after coffin still,
A sad and sickening show;
From grief exempt, I never had dreamt
Of such a world of woe!

"Of the hearts that daily break,
Of the tears that hourly fall,
Of the many, many troubles of life,
That grieve this earthly ball —
Disease, and Hunger, and Pain, and Want,
But now I dreamt of them all!

"For the blind and the cripple were there,
And the babe that pined for bread,
And the houseless man, and the widow poor
Who begged — to bury the dead;
The naked, alas! that I might have clad.
The famished I might have fed!

"The sorrow I might have soothed,
And the unregarded tears;
For many a thronging shape was there,
From long-forgotten years,—
Ay, even the poor rejected Moor,
Who raised my childish fears!

"Each pleading look, that long ago
I scanned with a heedless eye,
Each face was gazing as plainly there
As when I passed it by:
Woe, woe for me if the past should be
Thus present when I die!

"No need of sulphureous lake,
No need of fiery coal,
But only that crowd of human kind
Who wanted pity and dole —
In everlasting retrospect —
Will wring my sinful soul!

"Alas! I have walked through life
Too heedless where I trod;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow-worm,
And fill the burial sod —
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
Not unmarked of God!

"I drank the richest draughts;
And ate whatever is good —
Fish, and flesh, and fowl, and fruit,
Supplied my hungry mood;
But I never remembered the wretched ones
That starve for want of food!

"I dressed as the noble dress,
In cloth of silver and gold,
With silk, and satin, and costly furs,
In many an ample fold;
But I never remembered the naked limbs
That froze with winter's cold.

"The wounds I might have healed!
The human sorrow and smart!
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part:
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart!"

She clasped her fervent hands,
And the tears began to stream;
Large, and bitter, and fast they fell,
Remorse was so extreme,
And yet, O, yet, that many a dame
Would dream the Lady's Dream

THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK.

AN ALLEGORY.

THERE 'S a murmur in the air.
A noise in every street —
The murmur of many tongues,
The noise of numerous feet —
While round the workhouse door
The laboring classes flock,
For why? — the overseer of the poor
Is setting the workhouse clock.

Who does not hear the tramp
Of thousands speeding along
Of either sex and various stamp,
Sickly, crippled, or strong,
Walking, limping, creeping
From court, and alley, and lane,
But all in one direction sweeping,
Like rivers that seek the main?
Who does not see them sally
From mill, and garret, and room,
In lane, and court, and alley,
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,
Furnished with shuttle and loom —
Poor slaves of Civilization's galley —
And in the road and footways rally,
As if for the day of doom?

Some, of hardly human form,
Stunted, crooked, and crippled by toil;
Dingy with smoke and dust and oil,
And smirched besides with vicious soil,
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm.
Father, mother, and careful child,
Looking as if it had never smiled —
The seamstress, lean, and weary, and wan,
With only the ghosts of garments on —
The weaver, her sallow neighbor,
The grim and sooty artisan;
Every soul — child, woman, or man,
Who lives — or dies — by labor.

Stirred by an overwhelming zeal,
And social impulse, a terrible throng!
Leaving shuttle, and needle, and wheel,
Furnace, and grindstone, spindle, and reel,
Thread, and yarn, and iron, and steel —
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal —
Gushing, rushing, crushing along,
A very torrent of Man!
Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,
Grown at last to a hurricane strong,
Stop its course who can!
Stop who can its onward course
And irresistible moral force;
O! vain and idle dream!
For surely as men are all akin,
Whether of fair or sable skin,
According to Nature's scheme,
That human movement contains within
A blood-power stronger than steam.

Onward, onward, with hasty feet,
They swarm — and westward still —
Masses born to drink and eat,
But starving amidst Whitechapel's meat,
And famishing down Cornhill!
Through the Poultry — but still unfed —
Christian charity, hang your head!
Hungry — passing the Street of Bread;
Thirsty — the Street of Milk;
Ragged — beside the Ludgate mart,
So gorgeous, through mechanic art,
With cotton, and wool, and silk!

At last, before that door
That bears so many a knock
Ere ever it opens to sick or poor,
Like sheep they huddle and flock —
And would that all the good and wise
Could see the million of hollow eyes,
With a gleam derived from hope and the skies,
Upturned to the workhouse clock!

O! that the parish powers,
Who regulate labor's hours,
The daily amount of human trial,
Weariness, pain, and self-denial,
Would turn from the artificial dial
That striketh ten or eleven,
And go, for once, by that older one
That stands in the light of Nature's sun,
And takes its time from Heaven!

NOTES

The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies.

This poem was first published in a volume in 1827, shortly after the appearance of *Whims and Oddities* and the *National Tales*. The versatility of talent evinced by these various productions was a subject of comment among the critics, one of the most distinguished of whom thus remarks upon their author: "He now comes before us as a poet, in the most abstract sense of the word; and we should suppose, in reading his volume, that he had been all his life dreaming of 'fancies fond, and shadows numberless,' and that, for the sake of indulging in these toys of the brain, he had spurned at every thing which human beings and ordinary society were capable of presenting to his view. We never saw a more confirmed case of poetical mania."

Lycus, the Centaur.

"Lycus, the Centaur," said a not unfriendly reviewer, "though containing several fine ideas, is, for the most part, beyond our comprehension. We know not what it resembles, except the incoherent record of a dream inspired by a night-mare." It appeared originally in the *London Magazine* for August, 1822.

The Two Peacocks of Bedfont.

Appended to this tale in the *London Magazine* for October, 1822, is the following note: "If any man, in his unbelief, should doubt the truth and manner of this occurrence, he may in an easy way be assured thereof to his satisfaction, by going to Bedfont, a journey of some thirteen miles, where, in the church-yard, he may with his own eyes behold the two peacocks. They seem at first sight to be of yew-tree, which they greatly resemble; but, on drawing nearer, he will perceive, cut therein, the date 1704, being, without doubt, the year of their transformation."

The Two Swans.

First printed in Campbell's *New Monthly Magazine* for February, 1824.

The Dream of Eugene Aram.

This remarkable poem appeared in the *Gem* annual for 1829, edited for that year only by the author. Appended was the following note: "The late Admiral Burney went to school at an establishment where the unhappy Eugene Aram was usher, subsequent to his crime. The admiral stated that Aram was generally liked by the boys, and that he used to discourse to them about *murder* in somewhat of the spirit that is attributed to him in the poem." The admiral was a friend of Charles Lamb's, and it was doubtless from a conversation with him at Lamb's house that Hood became first impressed with the subject that he has treated with such singular felicity.

"In good old age," says Talfourd, sketching the old set who were Lamb's Temple guests, "departed Admiral Burney, frank-hearted voyager with Captain Cook round the world, who seemed to unite our society with the circle over which Dr. Johnson reigned; who used to tell of school-days under the tutelage of Eugene Aram; how he remembered the gentle usher pacing the play-ground arm-in-arm with some one of the elder boys, and seeking relief from the unsuspected burden of his conscience by talking of strange murders, and how he, a child, had shuddered at the handcuffs on his teacher's hands when taken away in the post-chaise to prison; the admiral being himself the center of a little circle which his sister, the famous authoress of *Evelina*, *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, sometimes graced."

Eugene Aram was born at Ramsgill, in Yorkshire, in 1704, and was executed on the 6th of August, 1759, for the murder of Daniel Clark, a shoemaker. This murder remained undetected for some fourteen years, when a skeleton was dug up near Knaresborough, which created suspicions that led to the sudden arrest of Aram and his conviction of the crime. Aram meanwhile had been pursuing his avocation of an usher, and his studies in heraldry, botany, and the languages, with untiring zeal and perseverance. Intimations had been frequently thrown out by his wife that Aram and a man named Housemann were privy to Clark's disappearance. Housemann testified before the coroner that Aram and one Ferry were the

murderers, and that the body had been buried in St. Robert's cave, near Knaresborough. The skeleton was discovered in the place indicated, and the guilt of Aram established on his trial by circumstantial evidence that seemed conclusive. He conducted his own defense with great ingenuity and self-command. After condemnation he confessed his guilt to his attending clergyman, but declared that Housemann's share in the murder was larger than he acknowledged, and such was the public impression produced by the trial. The motive was supposed to be plunder, but Aram declared that he was instigated solely by jealousy, as he suspected Clark of having made love to his wife. On the night before the execution he attempted suicide.

A correspondent of the *London Literary Gazette* (14th January, 1832) states that the skull of Eugene Aram was adventurously removed from the iron hoop which bound it to the gibbet on which it was exposed, by a physician of Knaresborough, who desired to enrich his museum with an *unique* specimen. The trophy remained a long time in the possession of this *virtuoso*, and on his death fell into the hands of a gentleman in the neighborhood, distinguished for his scientific and literary attainments. In the year 1817 this gentleman submitted it to the judgment of Dr. Spurzheim, without communicating its history. The doctor pronounced it the skull of a woman, or of a man whose mind had entered into a female habitation. "The female," he said, "had a good share of common sense, without being able to reason deeply; she was pleased with witty, amusing and superstitious stories, and fond of theatrical performances. She had strong feelings without great hope—a great deal of vanity, attachment, and personal courage; she might have been able to commit an error to please those whom she liked. Example was to her particularly important; she was not indifferent as to sexual intercourse,—was more easily guided by soft means and flattering treatment than by command, which revolted her feelings, and would induce her to have recourse to desperate means."

Spurzheim was informed that the skull was that of a male. He thereupon transmitted a letter (unfortunately lost) full of curious remarks upon the skulls of the different great families or tribes of mankind, and pronounced Aram's skull to resemble that of a Celt. Aram himself boasts of his Celtic blood. It is odd enough that he should in his defense have spoken of the difficulty of distinguishing male from female bones. Another circumstance alluded to by Aram in his

defense, the escape of the prisoner, double-ironed, from York Castle, was only cleared up a few years ago by the discovery of a skeleton in irons between the outer and inner walls of the prison, where he had doubtless fallen and perished.

The tradition of Aram's character at Lynn, in Norfolk, represents him as a man of loneliness and mystery, sullen and reserved, but until his apprehension of a reputation entirely unexceptionable. On holidays and when his duties would allow he strayed solitary and cheerless, as if to avoid the world, amongst the flat, uninteresting marshes which are situated on the opposite side of the river Ouse. The spot just at the entrance to the play-ground, at which Aram was taken into custody by two strange men from Yorkshire, is still remarked and pointed out by the school boys.

The Elm Tree: A Dream in the Woods.

This was one of the later poems of the author, appearing in the *New Monthly Magazine*, then under his editorial supervision, in 1842.

The Haunted House.

First published in *Hood's Magazine* for January, 1844.

The Bridge of Sighs.

From *Hood's Magazine* for May, 1844.

The Song of the Shirt.

It has been stated that the original manuscript of the *Song of the Shirt* is now in the autograph collection of a gentleman of New York. It is wholly in Hood's writing, and has in the center the round mark caused by its being put on the file as "copy" in the printing office of *Punch*, in which journal it appeared in December, 1843. It came to its present possessor directly from Mark Lemon, editor of *Punch*. Five guineas was the price paid for the contribution.

The Lady's Dream.

From *Hood's Magazine*, February, 1844.

The Workhouse Clock.

From *Hood's Magazine* for April, 1844.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FAIR INES.

O saw ye not fair Ines?
She 's gone into the west,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest:
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek.
And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivalled bright;
And blesséd will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gayly by thy side,
And whispered thee so near! —

Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before:
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore;—
It would have been a beauteous dream,
—If it had been no more!

Alas, alas! fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad, and felt no mirth,
But only music's wrong,
In sounds that sang farewell, farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more

THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER.

SUMMER is gone on swallows' wings,
And earth has buried all her flowers:
No more the lark, the linnet sings,
But silence sits in faded bowers.
There is a shadow on the plain
Of Winter ere he comes again,—
There is in woods a solemn sound
Of hollow warnings whispered round,
As Echo in her deep recess
For once had turned a prophetess.
Shuddering Autumn stops to list,
And breathes his fear in sudden sighs,
With clouded face, and hazel eyes
That quench themselves, and hide in mist.

Yes, Summer 's gone like pageant bright;
Its glorious days of golden light
Are gone —the mimic suns that quiver,
Then melt in Time's dark-flowing river.
Gone the sweetly-scented breeze
That spoke in music to the trees;
Gone for damp and chilly breath,
As if fresh blown o'er marble seas,
Or newly from the lungs of Death.—
Gone its virgin roses' blushes,
Warm as when Aurora rushes
Freshly from the god's embrace,
With all her shame upon her face.
Old Time hath laid them in the mould;
Sure he is blind as well as old,
Whose hand relentless never spares
Young cheeks so beauty-bright as theirs!

Gone are the flame-eyed lovers now
From where so blushing-blest they tarried
Under the hawthorn's blossom-bough,
Gone; for Day and Night are married.
All the light of love is fled: —
Alas! that negro breasts should hide
The lips that were so rosy red,
At morning and at even-tide!

Delightful Summer! then adieu
Till thou shalt visit us anew:
But who without regretful sigh
Can say adieu, and see thee fly?
Not he that e'er hath felt thy power,
His joy expanding like a flower
That cometh after rain and snow,
Looks up at heaven, and learns to glow: —
Not he that fled from Babel-strife
To the green Sabbath-land of life,
To dodge dull Care 'mid clustered trees,
And cool his forehead in the breeze,—
Whose spirit, weary-worn perchance,
Shook from its wings a weight of grief,
And perched upon an aspen-leaf,
For every breath to make it dance.

Farewell! — on wings of sombre stain,
That blacken in the last blue skies,
Thou fly'st; but thou wilt come again
On the gay wings of butterflies.
Spring at thy approach will sprout
Her new Corinthian beauties out,
Leaf-woven homes, where twitter-words
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds;

Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,
And April smiles to sunny hours.
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights
Full of soft breath and echo-lights,
As if the god of sun-time kept
His eyes half-open while he slept.
Roses shall be where roses were,
Not shadows, but reality;
As if they never perished there,
But slept in immortality:
Nature shall thrill with new delight,
And Time's relumined river run
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright
As if its source were in the sun!

But say, hath Winter then no charms?
Is there no joy, no gladness, warms
His aged heart? no happy wiles
To cheat the hoary one to smiles?
Onward he comes — the cruel North
Pours his furious whirlwind forth
Before him — and we breathe the breath
Of famished bears that howl to death.
Onward he comes from rocks that blanch
O'er solid streams that never flow;
His tears all ice, his locks all snow,
Just crept from some huge avalanche —
A thing half-breathing and half-warm,
As if one spark began to glow
Within some statue's marble form,
Or pilgrim stiffened in the storm.
O! will not Mirth's light arrows fail
To pierce that frozen coat of mail?

O! will not joy but strive in vain
To light up those glazed eyes again?

No! take him in, and blaze the oak,
And pour the wine, and warm the ale;
His sides shall shake to many a joke,
His tongue shall thaw in many a tale,
His eyes grow bright, his heart be gay,
And even his palsy charmed away.
What heeds he then the boisterous shout
Of angry winds that scold without,
Like shrewish wives at tavern door?
What heeds he then the wild uproar
Of billows bursting on the shore?
In dashing waves, in howling breeze,
There is a music that can charm him;
When safe, and sheltered, and at ease,
He hears the storm that cannot harm him.

But hark! those shouts! that sudden din
Of little hearts that laugh within.
O! take him where the youngsters play,
And he will grow as young as they!
They come! they come! each blue-eyed Sport,
The Twelfth-Night King and all his court —
'T is Mirth fresh crowned with mistletoe!
Music with her merry fiddles,
Joy "on light fantastic toe,"
Wit with all his jests and riddles,
Singing and dancing as they go.
And Love, young Love, among the rest,
A welcome — nor unbidden guest.

But still for Summer dost thou grieve?
Then read our poets — they shall weave

A garden of green fancies still,
Where thy wish may rove at will.
They have kept for after treats
The essences of summer sweets,
And echoes of its songs that wind
In endless music through the mind:
They have stamped in visible traces
The "thoughts that breathe," in words that shine—
The flights of soul in sunny places —
To greet and company with thine.
These shall wing thee on to flowers —
The past or future that shall seem
All the brighter in thy dream
For blowing in such desert hours.
The summer never shines so bright
As thought of in a winter's night;
And the sweetest, loveliest rose
Is in the bud before it blows;
The dear one of the lover's heart
Is painted to his longing eyes,
In charms she ne'er can realize —
But when she turns again to part.
Dream thou then, and bind thy brow
With wreath of fancy roses now,
And drink of summer in the cup
Where the Muse hath mixed it up;
The "dance, and song, and sun-burnt mirth,"
With the warm nectar of the earth:
Drink! 't will glow in every vein,
And thou shalt dream the winter through:
Then waken to the sun again,
And find thy summer vision true!

ODE:

AUTUMN.

I SAW old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn; —
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

Where are the songs of Summer? — With the sun,
Oping the dusky eyelids of the South,
Till shade and silence waken up as one,
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.
Where are the merry birds? — Away, away,
On panting wings through the inclement skies,
Lest owls should prey
Undazzled at noon-day,
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.
Where are the blooms of Summer? — In the west,
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest
Like tearful Proserpine, snatched from her flowers
To a most gloomy breast.
Where is the pride of Summer, — the green prime, —
The many, many leaves all twinkling? — Three
On the mossed elm; three on the naked lime
Trembling, — and one upon the old oak tree!
Where is the Dryad's immortality? —
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplished hoard,
The ants have brimmed their garners with ripe grain,
And honey-bees have stored
The sweets of summer in their luscious cells;
The swallows all have winged across the main;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.
Alone, alone,
Upon a mossy stone,
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone,
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the withered world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drownéd past
In the hushed mind's mysterious far away,
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into that distance, gray upon the gray.

O, go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded
Under the languid downfall of her hair:
She wears a coronal of flowers faded
Upon her forehead, and a face of care; —
There is enough of withered everywhere
To make her bower, — and enough of gloom;
There is enough of sadness to invite,
If only for the rose that died, — whose doom
Is Beauty's, — she that with the living bloom
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light; —
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear, –
Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

SONG.

FOR MUSIC.

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here!

Thy gown should be snow-white silk;
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipped in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls!

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dower —
But fairies have broke their wands,
And wishing has lost its power!

BALLAD.

SPRING it is cheery,
Winter is dreary,
Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly;
When he 's forsaken,
Withered and shaken,
What can an old man do but die?

Love will not clip him,
Maids will not lip him,
Maud and Marian pass him by;
Youth it is sunny,
Age has no honey,—
What can an old man do but die?

June it was jolly,
O for its folly!
A dancing leg and a laughing eye!
Youth may be silly,
Wisdom is chilly,—
What can an old man do but die?

Friends they are scanty,
Beggars are plenty,
If he has followers, I know why;
Gold 's in his clutches,
(Buying him crutches!) —
What can an old man do but die?

HYMN TO THE SUN.

GIVER of glowing light!
Though but a god of other days,
The kings and sages
Of wiser ages
Still live and gladden in thy genial rays.

King of the tuneful lyre,
Still poets' hymns to thee belong;
Though lips are cold
Whereon of old
Thy beams all turned to worshipping and song

Lord of the dreadful bow,
None triumph now for Python's death;
But thou dost save
From hungry grave
The life that hangs upon a summer breath

Father of rosy day,
No more thy clouds of incense rise;
But waking flowers
At morning hours
Give out their sweets to meet thee in the skies.

God of the Delphic fane,
No more thou listenest to hymns sublime;
But they will leave
On winds at eve
A solemn echo to the end of time.

TO A COLD BEAUTY.

Lady, wouldst thou heiress be
To Winter's cold and cruel part?
When he sets the rivers free,
Thou dost still lock up thy heart; —
Thou that shouldst outlast the snow
But in the whiteness of thy brow?

Scorn and cold neglect are made
For winter gloom and winter wind,
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,
Breathing it to words unkind,—
Breath which only should belong
To love, to sunlight, and to song!

When the little buds unclose,
Red, and white, and pied, and blue,
And that virgin flower, the rose,
Opes her heart to hold the dew,
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up
With no jewel in its cup?

Let not cold December sit
  Thus in Love's peculiar throne;—
Brooklets are not prisoned now,
  But crystal frosts are all agone,
And that which hangs upon the spray,
  It is no snow, but flower of May!

RUTH.

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened; — such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell;
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim; —
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks: —

Sure, I said, Heaven did not mean
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

THE SEA OF DEATH.

A FRAGMENT.

——— METHOUGHT I saw
Life swiftly treading over endless space;
And, at her foot-print, but a bygone pace,
The ocean-past, which, with increasing wave,
Swallowed her steps like a pursuing grave.

Sad were my thoughts that anchored silently
On the dead waters of that passionless sea,
Unstirred by any touch of living breath:
Silence hung over it, and drowsy Death,
Like a gorged sea-bird, slept with folded wings
On crowded carcasses — sad passive things
That wore the thin gray surface like a veil
Over the calmness of their features pale.

And there were spring-faced cherubs that did sleep
Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,
How beautiful! with bright unruffled hair
On sleek unfretted brows, and eyes that were
Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse!
And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant lips,
Meekly apart, as if the soul intense
Spake out in dreams of its own innocence:
And so they lay in loveliness, and kept
The birth-night of their peace, that Life even wept
With very envy of their happy fronts;
For there were neighbor brows scarred by the brunts
Of strife and sorrowing — where Care had set
His crooked autograph, and marred the jet
Of glossy locks, with hollow eyes forlorn,
And lips that curled in bitterness and scorn—

Wretched,—as they had breathed of this world's pain,
And so bequeathed it to the world again,
Through the beholder's heart, in heavy sighs.
So lay they garmented in torpid light,
Under the pall of a transparent night,
Like solemn apparitions lulled sublime
To everlasting rest,—and with them Time
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.

AUTUMN.

The autumn skies are flushed with gold,
And fair and bright the rivers run;
These are but streams of winter cold,
And painted mists that quench the sun.

In secret boughs no sweet birds sing,
In secret boughs no bird can shroud;
These are but leaves that take to wing,
And wintry winds that pipe so loud.

'T is not trees' shade, but cloudy glooms
That on the cheerless valleys fall;
The flowers are in their grassy tombs,
And tears of dew are on them all.

BALLAD.

She 's up and gone, the graceless girl!
And robbed my failing years;
My blood before was thin and cold,
But now 't is turned to tears;—

My shadow falls upon my grave;
So near the brink I stand,
She might have staid a little yet,
And led me by the hand!

Ay, call her on the barren moor,
And call her on the hill,—
'T is nothing but the heron's cry,
And plover's answer shrill;
My child is flown on wilder wings
Than they have ever spread,
And I may even walk a waste
That widened when she fled.

Full many a thankless child has been,
But never one like mine;
Her meat was served on plates of gold,
Her drink was rosy wine;
But now she 'll share the robin's food,
And sup the common rill,
Before her feet will turn again
To meet her father's will!

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember
The roses red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birth-day,—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 't is little joy
To know I 'm further off from heaven
Than when I was a boy.

BALLAD.

Sigh on, sad heart, for Love's eclipse
And Beauty's fairest queen,
Though 't is not for my peasant lips
To soil her name between:

A king might lay his sceptre down,
But I am poor and naught,
The brow should wear a golden crown
That wears her in its thought.

The diamonds glancing in her hair,
Whose sudden beams surprise,
Might bid such humble hopes beware
The glancing of her eyes;
Yet looking once, I looked too long,
And if my love is sin,
Death follows on the heels of wrong,
And kills the crime within.

Her dress seemed wove of lily leaves,
It was so pure and fine,
O lofty wears, and lowly weaves,
But hoddan gray is mine;
And homely hose must step apart,
Where gartered princes stand,
But may he wear my love at heart
That wins her lily hand!

Alas! there 's far from russet frize
To silks and satin gowns,
But I doubt if God made like degrees
In courtly hearts and clowns.
My father wronged a maiden's mirth,
And brought her cheeks to blame,
And all that 's lordly of my birth
Is my reproach and shame!

'T is vain to weep,— 't is vain to sigh,
'T is vain this idle speech,
For where her happy pearls do lie
My tears may never reach;

Yet when I 'm gone, e'en lofty pride
May say of what has been,
His love was nobly born and died,
Though all the rest was mean !

My speech is rude,— but speech is weak
Such love as mine to tell,
Yet had I words, I dare not speak,
So, lady, fare thee well;
I will not wish thy better state
Was one of low degree,
But I must weep that partial fate
Made such a churl of me.

THE WATER LADY.

Alas ! the moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see ! —
I saw a maiden on a stream,
And fair was she !

I staid a while, to see her throw
Her tresses back, that all beset
The fair horizon of her brow
With clouds of jet.

I staid a little while to view
Her cheek, that wore in place of red
The bloom of water, tender blue,
Daintily spread.

I staid to watch, a little space,
Her parted lips if she would sing:
The waters closed above her face
With many a ring.

And still I staid a little more;
Alas! she never comes again!
I throw my flowers from the shore,
And watch in vain.

I know my life will fade away,
I know that I must vainly pine;
For I am made of mortal clay,
But she 's divine!

THE EXILE.

THE swallow with summer
Will wing o'er the seas,
The wind that I sigh to
Will visit thy trees,
The ship that it hastens
Thy ports will contain.
But me — I must never
See England again!

There 's many that weep there,
But one weeps alone,
For the tears that are falling
So far from her own;
So far from thy own, love,
We know not our pain;
If death is between us,
Or only the main.

When the white cloud reclines
On the verge of the sea,
I fancy the white cliffs,
And dream upon thee;

But the cloud spread its wings
To the blue heaven and flies.
We never shall meet, love,
Except in the skies!

TO AN ABSENTEE.

O'ER hill, and dale, and distant sea,
Through all the miles that stretch between,
My thought must fly to rest on thee,
And would, though worlds should intervene.

Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks
The further we are forced apart,
Affection's firm elastic links
But bind the closer round the heart.

For now we sever each from each,
I learn what I have lost in thee;
Alas! that nothing less could teach
How great indeed my love should be!

Farewell! I did not know thy worth;
But thou art gone, and now 't is prized:
So angels walked unknown on earth,
But when they flew were recognized!

SONG.

THE stars are with the voyager
Wherever he may sail;
The moon is constant to her time:
The sun will never fail;

But follow, follow round the world,
The green earth and the sea;
So love is with the lover's heart,
Wherever he may be.

Wherever he may be, the stars
Must daily lose their light;
The moon will veil her in the shade;
The sun will set at night.
The sun may set, but constant love
Will shine when he 's away;
So that dull night is never night,
And day is brighter day.

ODE TO THE MOON.

Mother of light! how fairly dost thou go
Over those hoary crests, divinely led! —
Art thou that huntress of the silver bow
Fabled of old? Or rather dost thou tread
Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,
Like the wild chamois from her Alpine snow,
Where hunter never climbed, — secure from dread?
How many antique fancies have I read
Of that mild presence! and how many wrought!
Wondrous and bright,
Upon the silver light,
Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought!

What art thou like? — sometimes I see thee ride
A far-bound galley on its perilous way,
Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray: —
Sometimes behold thee glide,

Clustered by all thy family of stars,
Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide,
Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars; —
Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,
Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,
Till in some Latmian cave I see thee creep,
To catch the young Endymion asleep,—
Leaving thy splendor at the jagged porch! —

O, thou art beautiful, howe'er it be!
Huntress, or Dian, or whatever named;
And he, the veriest Pagan, that first framed
A silver idol, and ne'er worshipped thee! —
It is too late, or thou shouldst have my knee;
Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,
And not divine the crescent on thy brows! —
Yet, call thee nothing but the mere mild moon,
Behind those chestnut boughs,
Casting their dappled shadows at my feet;
I will be grateful for that simple boon,
In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,
And bless thy dainty face whene'er we meet.

In nights far gone,— ay, far away and dead,—
Before Care-fretted with a lidless eye,—
I was thy wooer on my little bed,
Letting the early hours of rest go by,
To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,
And feed thy snow-white swans, before I slept;
For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—
Thou wert the fairies' armorer, that kept
Their burnished helms, and crowns, and corselets bright,
Their spears and glittering mails;

And ever thou didst spill in winding streams
Sparkles and midnight gleams,
For fishes to new gloss their argent scales ! —

Why sighs ? — why creeping tears ? — why claspéd hands ? —
Is it to count the boy's expended dower ?
That fairies since have broke their gifted wands ?
That young Delight, like any o'erblown flower,
Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground ? —
Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,
Thou art a sadder dial to old Time
Than ever I have found
On sunny garden-plot, or moss-grown tower,
Mottoed with stern and melancholy rhyme.

Why should I grieve for this ? — O I must yearn,
Whilst Time, conspirator with Memory,
Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,
Richly embossed with childhood's revelry,
With leaves and clustered fruits, and flowers eterne, —
(Eternal to the world, though not to me,)
Aye there will those brave sports and blossoms be,
The deathless wreath, and undecayed festoon,
When I am hearsed within, —
Less than the pallid primrose to the moon,
That now she watches through a vapor thin.

So let it be : — Before I lived to sigh,
Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,
Beautiful orb ! and so, whene'er I lie
Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.
Blest be thy loving light, where'er it spills,
And blessed thy fair face, O mother mild !
Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,

Still lend thy lonely lamp to lovers fond,
And blend their plighted shadows into one: —
Still smile at even on the bedded child,
And close his eyelids with thy silver wand!

TO ——.

WELCOME, dear heart, and a most kind good-morrow;
The day is gloomy, but our looks shall shine: —
Flowers I have none to give thee, but I borrow
Their sweetness in a verse to speak for thine.

Here are red roses, gathered at thy cheeks,—
The white were all too happy to look white:
For love the rose, for faith the lily speaks;
It withers in false hands, but here 'tis bright!

Dost love sweet hyacinth? Its scented leaf
Curls manifold,— all love's delights blow double:
'T is said this floweret is inscribed with grief,—
But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.

I plucked the primrose at night's dewy noon;
Like Hope, it showed its blossoms in the night; —
'T was like Endymion, watching for the moon!
And here are sunflowers, amorous of light!

These golden buttercups are April's seal,—
The daisy stars her constellations be:
These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,
Therefore I pluck no daisies but for thee!

Here 's daisies for the morn, primrose for gloom,
Pansies and roses for the noontide hours: —
A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—
So may thy life be measured out by flowers!

THE FORSAKEN.

THE dead are in their silent graves,
And the dew is cold above,
And the living weep and sigh
Over dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,
But now the living cause my pain:
How couldst thou steal me from my tears
To leave me to my tears again?

My mother rests beneath the sod,—
Her rest is calm and very deep:
I wished that she could see our loves,—
But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,
The morning saw them turned to gray,
Once they were black and well beloved,
But thou art changed,—and so are they!

The useless lock I gave thee once,
To gaze upon and think of me,
Was ta'en with smiles,—but this was torn
In sorrow that I send to thee.

AUTUMN.

THE Autumn is old,
The sere leaves are flying;—
He hath gathered up gold,
And now he is dying;—
Old age, begin sighing!

The vintage is ripe,
The harvest is heaping; —
But some that have sowed
Have no riches for reaping; —
Poor wretch, fall a weeping!

The year 's in the wane,
There is nothing adorning,
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning; —
Cold winter gives warning.

The rivers run chill,
The red sun is sinking,
And I am grown old,
And life is fast shrinking; —
Here 's enow for sad thinking!

ODE TO MELANCHOLY.

Come, let us set our careful breasts,
Like Philomel, against the thorn,
To aggravate the inward grief,
That makes her accents so forlorn;
The world has many cruel points,
Whereby our bosoms have been torn,
And there are dainty themes of grief,
In sadness to outlast the morn,—
True honor's dearth, affection's death,
Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,
With all the piteous tales that tears
Have watered since the world was born.

The world! —it is a wilderness,
Where tears are hung on every tree;
For thus my gloomy fantasy
Makes all things weep with me!
Come let us sit and watch the sky,
And fancy clouds where no clouds be;
Grief is enough to blot the eye,
And make heaven black with misery.
Why should birds sing such merry notes,
Unless they were more blest than we?
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,
Except sweet nightingale; for she
Was born to pain our hearts the more
With her sad melody.
Why shines the sun, except that he
Makes gloomy nooks for Grief to hide,
And pensive shades for Melancholy,
When all the earth is bright beside?
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass wave,
Mirth shall not win us back again,
Whilst man is made of his own grave,
And fairest clouds but gilded rain!

I saw my mother in her shroud,
Her cheek was cold and very pale;
And ever since I 've looked on all
As creatures doomed to fail!
Why do buds ope, except to die?
Ay, let us watch the roses wither,
And think of our loves' cheeks;
And, O, how quickly time doth fly
To bring death's winter hither!
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks.

Months, years, and ages, shrink to naught;
An age past is but a thought!

Ay, let us think of him a while,
That, with a coffin for a boat,
Rows daily o'er the Stygian moat,
And for our table choose a tomb:
There 's dark enough in any skull
To charge with black a raven plume;
And for the saddest funeral thoughts
A winding-sheet hath ample room,
Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,
Hath writ the common doom.
How wide the yew-tree spreads its gloom,
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,
As if in tears it wept for them,
The many human families
That sleep around its stem!
How cold the dead have made these stones,
With natural drops kept ever wet!
Lo! here the best, the worst, the world
Doth now remember or forget,
Are in one common ruin hurled,
And love and hate are calmly met;
The loveliest eyes that ever shone,
The fairest hands, and locks of jet.
Is 't not enough to vex our souls,
And fill our eyes, that we have set
Our love upon a rose's leaf,
Our hearts upon a violet?
Blue eyes, red cheeks, are frailer yet;
And, sometimes, at their swift decay
Beforehand we must fret:
The roses bud and bloom again;

But love may haunt the grave of love,
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this:
Forgive, if somewhile I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss.
As frighted Proserpine let fall
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,
Even so the dark and bright will kiss.
The sunniest things throw sternest shade.
And there is even a happiness
That makes the heart afraid!
Now let us with a spell invoke
The full-orbed moon to grieve our eyes;
Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud
Lapped all about her, let her rise
All pale and dim, as if from rest
The ghost of the late buried sun
Had crept into the skies.
The moon! she is the source of sighs,
The very face to make us sad;
If but to think in other times
The same calm quiet look she had,
As if the world held nothing base,
Of vile and mean, of fierce and bad;
The same fair light that shone in streams,
The fairy lamp that charmed the lad;
For so it is, with spent delights
She taunts men's brains, and makes them mad.
All things are touched with melancholy,
Born of the secret soul's mistrust.

To feel her fair ethereal wings
Weighed down with vile degraded dust;
Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O, give her, then, her tribute just,
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy!
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter solely;
There 's not a string attuned to mirth,
But has its chord in Melancholy.

SONNETS.

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKSPEARE.

How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled!
Hues of all flowers that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
Look here how honor glorifies the dead,
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold! —
Such is the memory of poets old,
Who on Parnassus' hill have bloomed elate;
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
And turned to clay, whereof they were create;
But god Apollo hath them all enrolled,
And blazoned on the very clouds of fate!

TO FANCY.

MOST delicate Ariel! submissive thing,
Won by the mind's high magic to its hest,—
Invisible embassy, or secret guest,—
Weighing the light air on a lighter wing; —
Whether into the midnight moon, to bring
Illuminate visions to the eye of rest,—
Or rich romances from the florid West,—
Or to the sea, for mystic whispering,—
Still by thy charmed allegiance to the will
The fruitful wishes prosper in the brain,
As by the fingering of fairy skill,—
Moonlight, and waters, and soft music's strain,
Odors, and blooms, and *my* Miranda's smile,
Making this dull world an enchanted isle.

TO AN ENTHUSIAST.

YOUNG ardent soul, graced with fair Nature's truth,
Spring warmth of heart, and fervency of mind,
And still a large late love of all thy kind,
Spite of the world's cold practice and Time's tooth,
For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth,
Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind
Thine eyes with tears,— that thou hast not resigned
The passionate fire and freshness of thy youth:
For as the current of thy life shall flow,
Gilded by shine of sun or shadow-stained,
Through flowery valley or unwholesome fen,
Thrice blessed in thy joy, or in thy woe
Thrice cursed of thy race,— thou art ordained
To share beyond the lot of common men.

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spright
Be lapped in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this,— but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft,— and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

By every sweet tradition of true hearts,
Graven by Time, in love with his own lore;
By all old martyrdoms and antique smarts,
Wherein Love died to be alive the more;
Yea, by the sad impression on the shore
Left by the drowned Leander, to endear
That coast forever, where the billows' roar
Moaneth for pity in the poet's ear;
By Hero's faith, and the foreboding tear
That quenched her brand's last twinkle in its fall;
By Sappho's leap, and the low rustling fear
That sighed around her flight; I swear by all,
The world shall find such pattern in my act,
As if Love's great examples still were lacked.

ON RECEIVING A GIFT.

LOOK how the golden ocean shines above
Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their girth;
So does the bright and blessed light of love
Its own things glorify, and raise their worth.
As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,
And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,
Even so our tokens shine; nay, they outshine
Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed;
For where be ocean waves but half so clear,
So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,
As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,
That hath no dregs to be upturned by storm?
Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,
And more than gold to doting Avarice.

SILENCE.

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave — under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound
No voice is hushed — no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

THE curse of Adam, the old curse of all
Though I inherit in this feverish life
Of worldly toil, vain wishes, and hard strife,
And fruitless thought, in Care's eternal thrall,
Yet more sweet honey than of bitter gall
I taste, through thee, my Eva, my sweet wife.
Then what was Man's lost Paradise! — how rife
Of bliss, since love is with him in his fall!
Such as our own pure passion still might frame,
Of this fair earth, and its delightful bowers,
If no fell sorrow, like the serpent, came
To trail its venom o'er the sweetest flowers: —
But, O! as many and such tears are ours,
As only should be shed for guilt and shame!

LOVE, dearest lady, such as I would speak,
Lives not within the humor of the eye; —
Not being but an outward fantasy,
That skims the surface of a tinted cheek —
Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak,
As if the rose made summer,— and so lie
Amongst the perishable things that die,
Unlike the love which I would give and seek,
Whose health is of no hue — to feel decay
With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.
Love is its own great loveliness alway,
And takes new lustre from the touch of time;
Its bough owns no December and no May,
But bears its blossom into Winter's clime.

"THE LAST MAN."

'T WAS in the year two thousand and one
A pleasant morning of May,
I sat on the gallows-tree all alone,
A chanting a merry lay,—
To think how the pest had spared my life,
To sing with the larks that day!

When up the heath came a jolly knave,
Like a scarecrow, all in rags:
It made me crow to see his old duds
All abroad in the wind, like flags:—
So up he came to the timbers' foot
And pitched down his greasy bags.—

Good Lord! how blithe the old beggar was
At pulling out his scraps,—
The very sight of his broken orts
Made a work in his wrinkled chaps:
"Come down," says he, "you Newgate-bird,
And have a taste of my snaps!"——

Then down the rope, like a tar from the mast
I slided, and by him stood;
But I wished myself on the gallows again
When I smelt that beggar's food,—
A foul beef-bone and a mouldy crust;—
"O!" quoth he, "the heavens are good!"

Then after this grace he cast him down.
Says I, "You 'll get sweeter air
A pace or two off, on the windward side,"—
For the felons' bones lay there.—
But he only laughed at the empty skulls.
And offered them part of his fare.

"I never harmed *them*, and they won't harm me:
Let the proud and the rich be cravens!"
I did not like that strange beggar man,
He looked so up at the heavens.
Anon he shook out his empty old poke;
"There 's the crumbs," saith he, "for the ravens!"

It made me angry to see his face,
It had such a jesting look;
But while I made up my mind to speak,
A small case-bottle he took;
Quoth he, "Though I gather the green water-cress,
My drink is not of the brook!"

Full manners-like he tendered the dram.
O, it came of a dainty cask!
But, whenever it came to his turn to pull,
"Your leave, good sir, I must ask;
But I always wipe the brim with my sleeve,
When a hangman sups at my flask!"

And then he laughed so loudly and long,
The churl was quite out of breath;
I thought the very Old One was come
To mock me before my death,
And wished I had buried the dead men's bones
That were lying about the heath!

But the beggar gave me a jolly clap —
"Come, let us pledge each other,
For all the wide world is dead beside,
And we are brother and brother —
I've a yearning for thee in my heart,
As if we had come of one mother.

"I 've a yearning for thee in my heart,
That almost makes me weep,
For as I passed from town to town
The folks were all stone-asleep,—
But when I saw thee sitting aloft,
It made me both laugh and leap!"

Now a curse (I thought) be on his love,
And a curse upon his mirth,—
An' it were not for that beggar man
I 'd be the king of the earth,—
But I promised myself an hour should come
To make him rue his birth! —

So down we sat and boused again
Till the sun was in mid-sky,
When, just when the gentle west-wind came,
We hearkened a dismal cry;
"Up, up, on the tree," quoth the beggar man,
"Till these horrible dogs go by!"

And, lo! from the forest's far-off skirts
They came all yelling for gore,
A hundred hounds pursuing at once,
And a panting hart before,
Till he sunk adown at the gallows' foot,
And there his haunches they tore!

His haunches they tore, without a horn
To tell when the chase was done;
And there was not a single scarlet coat
To flaunt it in the sun! —
I turned, and looked at the beggar man,
And his tears dropt one by one!

And with curses sore he chid at the hounds,
Till the last dropt out of sight;
Anon, saith he, "Let 's down again,
And ramble for our delight,
For the world 's all free, and we may choose
A right cosey barn for to-night!"

With that, he set up his staff on end,
And it fell with the point due west;
So we fared that way to a city great
Where the folks had died of the pest —
It was fine to enter in house and hall,
Wherever it liked me best; —

For the porters all were stiff and cold,
And could not lift their heads;
And when he came where their masters lay,
The rats leapt out of the beds: —
The grandest palaces in the land
Were as free as workhouse sheds.

But the beggar man made a mumping face,
And knocked at every gate:
It made me curse to hear how he whined;
So our fellowship turned to hate,
And I bade him walk the world by himself,
For I scorned so humble a mate!

So *he* turned right and *I* turned left,
As if we had never met;
And I chose a fair stone house for myself,
For the city was all to let;
And for three brave holidays drank my fill
Of the choicest that I could get.

And because my jerkin was coarse and worn,
I got me a properer vest;
It was purple velvet, stitched o'er with gold,
And a shining star at the breast,—
'T was enough to fetch old Joan from her grave
To see me so purely drest! —

But Joan was dead and under the mould,
And every buxom lass;
In vain I watched at the window-pane,
For a Christian soul to pass; —
But sheep and kine wandered up the street,
And browsed on the new-come grass.—

When, lo! I spied the old beggar man,
And lustily he did sing! —
His rags were lapped in a scarlet cloak,
And a crown he had like a king;
So he stept right up before my gate
And danced me a saucy fling!

Heaven mend us all! — but, within my mind
I had killed him then and there;
To see him lording so braggart-like
That was born to his beggar's fare,
And how he had stolen the royal crown
His betters were meant to wear.

But God forbid that a thief should die,
Without his share of the laws!
So I nimbly whipt my tackle out,
And soon tied up his claws,—
I was judge myself, and jury, and all,
And solemnly tried the cause.

But the beggar man would not plead, but cried
Like a babe without its corals,
For he knew how hard it is apt to go
When the law and a thief have quarrels,—
There was not a Christian soul alive
To speak a word for his morals.

O, how gayly I doffed my costly gear,
And put on my work-day clothes;
I was tired of such a long Sunday life,—
And never was one of the sloths;
But the beggar man grumbled a weary deal,
And made many crooked mouths.

So I hauled him off to the gallows' foot,
And blinded him in his bags;
'T was a weary job to heave him up,
For a doomed man always lags;
But by ten of the clock he was off his legs
In the wind, and airing his rags!

So there he hung, and there I stood,
The last man left alive,
To have my own will of all the earth:
Quoth I, now I shall thrive!
But when was ever honey made
With one bee in a hive?

My conscience began to gnaw my heart,
Before the day was done,
For the other men's lives had all gone out,
Like candles in the sun! —
But it seemed as if I had broke, at last,
A thousand necks in one!

So I went and cut his body down,
To bury it decently; —
God send there were any good soul alive
To do the like by me!
But the wild dogs came with terrible speed,
And bayed me up the tree!

My sight was like a drunkard's sight,
And my head began to swim,
To see their jaws all white with foam,
Like the ravenous ocean-brim; —
But when the wild dogs trotted away
Their jaws were bloody and grim!

Their jaws were bloody and grim, good Lord!
But the beggar man, where was he? —
There was naught of him but some ribbons of rags
Below the gallows-tree! —
I know the devil, when I am dead,
Will send his hounds for me! —

I 've buried my babies one by one,
And dug the deep hole for Joan,
And covered the faces of kith and kin,
And felt the old church-yard stone
Go cold to my heart, full many a time,
But I never felt so lone!

For the lion and Adam were company,
And the tiger him beguiled;
But the simple kine are foes to my life,
And the household brutes are wild.
If the veriest cur would lick my hand,
I could love it like a child!

And the beggar man's ghost besets my dream,
At night, to make me madder,—
And my wretched conscience, within my breast,
Is like a stinging adder;—
I sigh when I pass the gallows' foot,
And look at the rope and ladder!

For hanging looks sweet,—but, alas! in vain
My desperate fancy begs,—
I must turn my cup of sorrows quite up,
And drink it to the dregs,—
For there is not another man alive,
In the world, to pull my legs!

THE LEE SHORE.

Sleet! and hail! and thunder!
And ye winds that rave,
Till the sands thereunder
Tinge the sullen wave—

Winds, that like a demon
Howl with horrid note
Round the toiling seaman,
In his tossing boat—

From his humble dwelling
On the shingly shore,
Where the billows swelling
Keep such hollow roar—

From that weeping woman,
Seeking with her cries

Succor superhuman
From the frowning skies —

From the urchin pining
For his father's knee —
From the lattice shining,
Drive him out to sea !

Let broad leagues dissever
Him from yonder foam ; —
O, God ! to think man ever
Comes too near his home !

THE DEATH-BED.

We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied —
We thought her dying when she slept.
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad.
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed — she had
Another morn than ours

LINES

ON SEEING MY WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN SLEEPING IN THE SAME CHAMBER.

And has the earth lost its so spacious round,
The sky its blue circumference above,
That in this little chamber there is found
Both earth and heaven — my universe of love!
All that my God can give me or remove,
Here sleeping, save myself, in mimic death.
Sweet that in this small compass I behove
To live their living and to breathe their breath!
Almost I wish that with one common sigh
We might resign all mundane care and strife,
And seek together that transcendent sky,
Where father, mother, children, husband, wife,
Together pant in everlasting life!

TO MY DAUGHTER,

ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Dear Fanny! nine long years ago,
While yet the morning sun was low,
And rosy with the eastern glow
The landscape smiled;
Whilst lowed the newly-wakened herds —
Sweet as the early song of birds,
I heard those first, delightful words,
"Thou hast a child!"

Along with that uprising dew
Tears glistened in my eyes, though few,
To hail a dawning quite as new,

To me, as time:
It was not sorrow — not annoy —
But like a happy maid, though coy,
With grief-like welcome, even joy
Forestalls its prime.

So may'st thou live, dear! many years,
In all the bliss that life endears,
Not without smiles, nor yet from tears
Too strictly kept:
When first thy infant littleness
I folded in my fond caress,
The greatest proof of happiness
Was this — I wept.

TO A CHILD

EMBRACING HIS MOTHER.

Love thy mother, little one!
Kiss and clasp her neck again,—
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
Love thy mother, little one!

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee,—
Hereafter thou may'st shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
Gaze upon her living eyes!

Press her lips the while they glow
With love that they have often told,—
Hereafter thou may'st press in woe,
And kiss them till thine own are cold.
Press her lips the while they glow!

O, revere her raven hair !
Although it be not silver-gray ;
Too early death, led on by care,
May snatch save one dear lock away.
O ! revere her raven hair !

Pray for her at eve and morn,
That heaven may long the stroke defer,—
For thou may'st live the hour forlorn
When thou wilt ask to die with her.
Pray for her at eve and morn !

STANZAS.

FAREWELL life ! my senses swim,
And the world is growing dim :
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night —
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapor chill ;
Strong the earthy odor grows —
I smell the mould above the rose !

Welcome life ! the spirit strives !
Strength returns and hope revives ;
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn,—
O'er the earth there comes a bloom ;
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapor cold —
I smell the rose above the mould !

April, 1845.

TO A FALSE FRIEND.

Our hands have met, but not our hearts;
Our hands will never meet again.
Friends if we have ever been,
Friends we cannot now remain·
I only know I loved you once,
I only know I loved in vain;
Our hands have met, but not our hearts;
Our hands will never meet again!

Then farewell to heart and hand!
I would our hands had never met:
Even the outward form of love
Must be resigned with some regret.
Friends we still might seem to be,
If my wrong could e'er forget
Our hands have joined, but not our hearts:
I would our hands had never met!

THE POET'S PORTION.

What is a mine — a treasury — a dower —
A magic talisman of mighty power?
A poet's wide possession of the earth.
He has the enjoyment of a flower's birth
Before its budding — ere the first red streaks,—
And winter cannot rob him of their cheeks.
Look — if his dawn be not as other men's!
Twenty bright flushes — ere another kens
The first of sunlight is abroad — he sees
Its golden 'lection of the topmost trees,
And opes the splendid fissures of the morn.
When do his fruits delay, when doth his corn

Linger for harvesting? Before the leaf
Is commonly abroad, in his piled sheaf
The flagging poppies lose their ancient flame.
No sweet there is, no pleasure I can name,
But he will sip it first — before the lees.
'T is his to taste rich honey,— ere the bees
Are busy with the brooms. He may forestall
June's rosy advent for his coronal;
Before the expectant buds upon the bough,
Twining his thoughts to bloom upon his brow.
O! blest to see the flower in its seed,
Before its leafy presence; for indeed
Leaves are but wings, on which the summer flies,
And each thing perishable fades and dies,
Escaped in thought; but his rich thinkings be
Like overflows of immortality.
So that what there is steeped shall perish never,
But live and bloom, and be a joy forever.

SONG.

O LADY, leave thy silken thread
And flowery tapestrie:
There 's living roses on the bush,
And blossoms on the tree;
Stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand
Some random bud will meet;
Thou canst not tread, but thou wilt find
The daisy at thy feet.

'T is like the birthday of the world,
When earth was born in bloom;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume;

There 's crimson buds, and white and blue —
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers.

There 's fairy tulips in the east,
The garden of the sun;
The very streams reflect the hues,
And blossom as they run:
While Morn opes like a crimson rose,
Still wet with pearly showers;
Then, lady, leave the silken thread
Thou twinest into flowers!

TIME, HOPE, AND MEMORY.

I HEARD a gentle maiden, in the spring,
Set her sweet sighs to music, and thus sing:
"Fly through the world, and I will follow thee,
Only for looks that may turn back on me;

"Only for roses that your chance may throw —
Though withered — I will wear them on my brow,
To be a thoughtful fragrance to my brain;
Warmed with such love, that they will bloom again.

"Thy love before thee, I must tread behind,
Kissing thy foot-prints, though to me unkind;
But trust not all her fondness, though it seem,
Lest thy true love should rest on a false dream.

"Her face is smiling, and her voice is sweet:
But smiles betray, and music sings deceit;
And words speak false; — yet, if they welcome prove,
I 'll be their echo, and repeat their love.

"Only if wakened to sad truth, at last,
The bitterness to come, and sweetness past;
When thou art vext, then, turn again, and see
Thou hast loved Hope, but Memory loved thee."

FLOWERS.

I WILL not have the mad Clytie,
Whose head is turned by the sun;
The tulip is a courtly quean,
Whom, therefore, I will shun;
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun; —
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand;
The wolfsbane I should dread; —
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead; —
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,
And so is no mate for me —
And the daisy's cheek is tipped with a blush,
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom 's betrothed to the bee; —
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

TO ——.

STILL glides the gentle streamlet on,
With shifting current new and strange;
The water that was here is gone,
But those green shadows never change.

Serene or ruffled by the storm,
On present waves, as on the past,
The mirrored grove retains its form,
The self-same trees their semblance cast.

The hue each fleeting globule wears
That drop bequeaths it to the next;
One picture still the surface bears,
To illustrate the murmured text.

So, love, however time may flow,
Fresh hours pursuing those that flee,
One constant image still shall show
My tide of life is true to thee.

TO ——.

LET us make a leap, my dear,
In our love, of many a year,
And date it very far away,
On a bright clear summer day,
When the heart was like a sun
To itself, and falsehood none;
And the rosy lips a part
Of the very loving heart,
And the shining of the eye
But a sign to know it by: —

When my faults were all forgiven,
And my life deserved of Heaven.
Dearest, let us reckon so,
And love for all that long ago;
Each absence count a year complete,
And keep a birthday when we meet.

TO ——.

I LOVE thee — I love thee!
'T is all that I can say; —
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray:
I love thee — I love thee!
Is all that I can say.

I love thee — I love thee!
Is ever on my tongue;
In all my proudest poesy
That chorus still is sung;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
Amidst the gay and young:
I love thee — I love thee!
A thousand maids among.

I love thee — I love thee!
Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
Whose tender tones entrance;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
That still these words enhance,
I love thee — I love thee!
Whatever be thy chance.

SERENADE.

Ah, sweet, thou little knowest how
I wake and passionate watches keep;
And yet, while I address thee now,
Methinks thou smilest in thy sleep.
'T is sweet enough to make me weep,
That tender thought of love and thee,
That while the world is hushed so deep,
Thy soul 's perhaps awake to me!

Sleep on, sleep on, sweet bride of sleep!
With golden visions for thy dower,
While I this midnight vigil keep,
And bless thee in thy silent bower;
To me 't is sweeter than the power
Of sleep, and fairy dreams unfurled,
That I alone, at this still hour,
In patient love outwatch the world.

VERSES IN AN ALBUM.

Far above the hollow
Tempest, and its moan,
Singeth bright Apollo
In his golden zone,—
Cloud doth never shade him,
Nor a storm invade him,
On his joyous throne.

So when I behold me
In an orb as bright,
How thy soul doth fold me

In its throne of light!
Sorrow never paineth
Nor a care attaineth,
To that blessed height.

BALLAD.

It was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast;
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed!

That churlish season never frowned
On early lovers yet!
O, no — the world was newly crowned
With flowers when first we met.

'T was twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast;
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed!

THE ROMANCE OF COLOGNE.

'T is even — on the pleasant banks of Rhine
The thrush is singing and the dove is cooing:
A youth and maiden on the turf recline
Alone — and he is wooing.

Yet woos in vain, for to the voice of love
No kindly sympathy the maid discovers,
Though round them both, and in the air above,
The tender spirit hovers.

Untouched by lovely Nature and her laws,
The more he pleads, more coyly she represses;
Her lips denies, and now her hand withdraws,
Rejecting his addresses.

Fair is she as the dreams young poets weave,
Bright eyes and dainty lips and tresses curly,
In outward loveliness a child of Eve,
But cold as nymph of Lurley.

The more Love tries her pity to engross,
The more she chills him with a strange behavior;
Now tells her beads, now gazes on the Cross
And image of the Saviour.

Forth goes the lover with a farewell moan,
As from the presence of a thing unhuman; —
O, what unholy spell hath turned to stone
The young warm heart of woman!

* * * * *

'T is midnight — and the moonbeam, cold and wan,
On bower and river quietly is sleeping,
And o'er the corse of a self-murdered man
The maiden fair is weeping.

In vain she looks into his glassy eyes,
No pressure answers to her hands so pressing;
In her fond arms impassively he lies,
Clay-cold to her caressing.

Despairing, stunned, by her eternal loss,
She flies to succor that may best beseem her;
But, lo! a frowning figure veils the Cross,
And hides the blest Redeemer!

With stern right hand it stretches forth a scroll,
Wherein she reads, in melancholy letters,

The cruel, fatal pact that placed her soul
And her young heart in fetters.

"Wretch! sinner! renegade to truth and God!
Thy holy faith for human love to barter!"
No more she hears, but on the bloody sod
Sinks, Bigotry's last martyr!

And side by side the hapless lovers lie;
Tell me, harsh priest! by yonder tragic token,
What part hath God in such a bond, whereby
Or hearts or vows are broken?

THE KEY.

A MOORISH ROMANCE.

"On the east coast, towards Tunis, the Moors still preserve the keys of their ancestors' houses in Spain; to which country they still express the hopes of one day returning, and again planting the Crescent on the ancient walls of the Alhambra."—SCOTT'S TRAVELS IN MOROCCO AND ALGIERS.

"Is Spain cloven in such a manner as to want closing?"—SANCHO PANZA.

THE Moor leans on his cushion,
With the pipe between his lips;
And still at frequent intervals
The sweet sherbét he sips;
But, spite of lulling vapor
And the sober cooling cup,
The spirit of the swarthy Moor
Is fiercely kindling up!

One hand is on his pistol,
On its ornamented stock,
While his finger feels the trigger
And is busy with the lock —

The other seeks his ataghan,
And clasps its jewelled hilt —
O! much of gore in days of yore
That crooked blade has split!

His brows are knit, his eyes of jet
In vivid blackness roll,
And gleam with fatal flashes
Like the fire-damp of the coal;
His jaws are set, and through his teeth
He draws a savage breath,
As if about to raise the shout
Of Victory or Death!

For why? the last Zebeck that came
And moored within the mole
Such tidings unto Tunis brought
As stir his very soul —
The cruel jar of civil war,
The sad and stormy reign,
That blackens like a thunder-cloud
The sunny land of Spain!

No strife of glorious Chivalry,
For honor's gain or loss,
Nor yet that ancient rivalry,
The Crescent with the Cross.
No charge of gallant Paladins
On Moslems stern and stanch;
But Christians shedding Christian blood
Beneath the olive's branch!

A war of horrid parricide,
And brother killing brother;
Yea, like to "dogs and sons of dogs,"
That worry one another.

But let them bite and tear and fight;
The more the Kaffers slay,
The sooner Hagar's swarming sons
Shall make the land a prey!

The sooner shall the Moor behold
The Alhambra's pile again,
And those who pined in Barbary
Shall shout for joy in Spain;
The sooner shall the Crescent wave
On dear Granada's walls,
And proud Mohammed Ali sit
Within his father's halls!

"Alla-il-alla!" tiger-like
Up springs the swarthy Moor,
And, with a wide and hasty stride,
Steps o'er the marble floor;
Across the hall, till from the wall.
Where such quaint patterns be,
With eager hand he snatches down
An old and massive key!

A massive key of curious shape,
And dark with dirt and rust,
And well three weary centuries
The metal might incrust!
For since the king Boabdil fell
Before the native stock,
That ancient key, so quaint to see,
Hath never been in lock.

Brought over by the Saracens
Who fled across the main,
A token of the secret hope
Of going back again;

From race to race, from hand to hand,
From house to house, it passed;
O, will it ever, ever ope
The palace gate, at last?

Three hundred years and fifty-two
On post and wall it hung —
Three hundred years and fifty-two
A dream to old and young;
But now a brighter destiny
The Prophet's will accords:
The time is come to scour the rust,
And lubricate the wards.

For should the Moor with sword and lance
At Algesiras land,
Where is the bold Bernardo now
Their progress to withstand?
To Burgos should the Moslem come,
Where is the noble Cid
Five royal crowns to topple down,
As gallant Diaz did?

Hath Xeres any Pounder now,
When other weapons fail,
With club to thrash invaders rash,
Like barley with a flail?
Hath Seville any Perez still,
To lay his clusters low,
And ride with seven turbans green
Around his saddle-bow?

No! never more shall Europe see
Such heroes brave and bold,
Such valor, faith, and loyalty,
As used to shine of old!

No longer to one battle-cry
United Spaniards run,
And with their thronging spears uphold
The Virgin and her Son!

From Cadiz Bay to rough Biscay
Internal discord dwells,
And Barcelona bears the scars
Of Spanish shot and shells.
The fleets decline, the merchants pine
For want of foreign trade;
And gold is scant; and Alicante
Is sealed by strict blockade!

The loyal fly, and valor falls,
Opposed by court intrigue;
But treachery and traitors thrive,
Upheld by foreign league;
While factions seeking private ends
By turns usurping reign —
Well may the dreaming, scheming Moor
Exulting point to Spain!

Well may he cleanse the rusty key
With Afric sand and oil,
And hope an Andalusian home
Shall recompense the toil!
Well may he swear the Moorish spear
Through wild Castile shall sweep,
And where the Catalonian sowed
The Saracen shall reap!

Well may he vow to spurn the Cross
Beneath the Arab hoof,
And plant the Crescent yet again
Above the Alhambra's roof,

When those from whom St. Jago's name
In chorus once arose
Are shouting faction's battle-cries,
And Spain forgets to "Close!"

Well may he swear his ataghan
Shall rout the traitor swarm,
And carve them into arabesques
That show no human form —
The blame be theirs whose bloody feuds
Invite the savage Moor,
And tempt him with the ancient key
To seek the ancient door!

SONNETS.

TO THE OCEAN.

SHALL I rebuke thee, Ocean, my old love,
That once, in rage, with the wild winds at strife,
Thou darest menace my unit of a life,
Sending my clay below, my soul above,
Whilst roared thy waves, like lions when they rove
By night, and bound upon their prey by stealth?
Yet didst thou ne'er restore my fainting health? —
Didst thou ne'er murmur gently like the dove?
Nay, didst thou not against my own dear shore
Full break, last link between my land and me? —
My absent friends talk in thy very roar,
In thy waves' beat their kindly pulse I see,
And, if I must not see my England more,
Next to her soil, my grave be found in thee!

Coblentz, May, 1835.

LEAR.

A POOR old king, with sorrow for my crown.
Throned upon straw, and mantled with the wind —
For pity, my own tears have made me blind,
That I might never see my children's frown;
And may be madness, like a friend, has thrown
A folded fillet over my dark mind,
So that unkindly speech may sound for kind,—
Albeit I know not.— I am childish grown —
And have not gold to purchase wit withal —
I that have once maintained most royal state —
A very bankrupt now, that may not call
My child, my child — all-beggared save in tears,
Wherewith I daily weep an old man's fate,
Foolish — and blind — and overcome with years!

SONNET TO A SONNET.

RARE composition of a poet-knight,
Most chivalrous amongst chivalric men,
Distinguished for a polished lance and pen
In tuneful contest and in tourney-fight;
Lustrous in scholarship, in honor bright,
Accomplished in all graces current then,
Humane as any in historic ken,
Brave, handsome, noble, affable, polite;
Most courteous to that race become of late
So fiercely scornful of all kind advance,
Rude, bitter, coarse, implacable in hate
To Albion, plotting ever her mischance,—
Alas, fair verse! how false and out of date
Thy phrase "sweet enemy" applied to France!

FALSE POETS AND TRUE.

Look how the lark soars upward and is gone
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!
His voice is heard, but body there is none
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
So, poets' songs are with us, though they die
Obscured and hid by Death's oblivious shroud,
And earth inherits the rich melody,
Like raining music from the morning cloud.
Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud,
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space
The noisy day is deafened by a crowd
Of undistinguished birds, a twittering race;
But only lark and nightingale forlorn
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

TO ——.

My heart is sick with longing, though I feed
On hope; Time goes with such a heavy pace
That neither brings nor takes from thy embrace
As if he slept — forgetting his old speed:
For, as in sunshine only we can read
The march of minutes on the dial's face,
So in the shadows of this lonely place
There is no love, and time is dead indeed.
But when, dear lady, I am near thy heart,
Thy smile is time, and then so swift it flies,
It seems we only meet to tear apart
With aching hands and lingering of eyes.
Alas, alas! that we must learn hours' flight
By the same light of love that makes them bright!

FOR THE FOURTEENTH OF FEBRUARY.

No popular respect will I omit
To do thee honor on this happy day,
When every loyal lover tasks his wit
His simple truth in studious rhymes to pay,
And to his mistress dear his hopes convey.
Rather thou knowest I would still outrun
All calendars with Love's,— whose date alway
Thy bright eyes govern better than the sun,—
For with thy favor was my life begun;
And still I reckon on from smiles to smiles,
And not by summers, for I thrive on none
But those thy cheerful countenance compiles:
O! if it be to choose and call thee mine,
Love, thou art every day my Valentine.

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

O, 'T IS a touching thing, to make one weep,—
A tender infant with its curtained eye,
Breathing as it would neither live nor die
With that unchanging countenance of sleep!
As if its silent dream, serene and deep,
Had lined its slumber with a still blue sky,
So that the passive cheeks unconscious lie,
With no more life than roses — just to keep
The blushes warm, and the mild, odorous breath
O blossom boy! so calm is thy repose,
So sweet a compromise of life and death,
'T is pity those fair buds should e'er unclose
For memory to stain their inward leaf,
Tinging thy dreams with unacquainted grief.

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

THINE eyelids slept so beauteously, I deemed
No eyes could wake so beautiful as they:
Thy rosy cheeks in such still slumbers lay.
I loved their peacefulness, nor ever dreamed
Of dimples; — for those parted lips so seemed,
I never thought a smile could sweetlier play,
Nor that so graceful life could chase away
Thy graceful death,— till those blue eyes upbeamed.
Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drowned,
And roses bloom more rosily for joy,
And odorous silence ripens into sound,
And fingers move to sound.— All-beauteous boy!
How thou dost waken into smiles, and prove,
If not more lovely, thou art more like Love!

THE world is with me, and its many cares,
Its woes — its wants — the anxious hopes and fears
That wait on all terrestrial affairs —
The shades of former and of future years —
Foreboding fancies and prophetic tears,
Quelling a spirit that was once elate.
Heavens! what a wilderness the world appears,
Where youth, and mirth, and health are out of date;
But no — a laugh of innocence and joy
Resounds, like music of the fairy race,
And, gladly turning from the world's annoy,
I gaze upon a little radiant face,
And bless, internally, the merry boy
Who "makes a *son-shine* in a shady place."

HUMOROUS POEMS.

HUMOROUS POEMS.

MISS KILMANSEGG AND HER PRECIOUS LEG.

A GOLDEN LEGEND.

"What is here?
Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold?"

TIMON OF ATHENS.

Her Pedigree.

To trace the Kilmansegg pedigree,
To the very roots of the family tree,
  Were a task as rash as ridiculous:
Through antediluvian mists as thick
As London fog such a line to pick
Were enough, in truth, to puzzle Old Nick,
  Not to name Sir Harris Nicholas.

It would n't require much verbal strain
To trace the Kill-man, perchance, to Cain;
  But, waving all such digressions,
Suffice it, according to family lore,
A Patriarch Kilmansegg lived of yore,
  Who was famed for his great possessions.

Tradition said he feathered his nest
Through an agricultural interest
  In the golden age of farming;
When golden eggs were laid by the geese,
And Colchian sheep wore a golden fleece,

And golden pippins — the sterling kind
Of Hesperus — now so hard to find —
Made horticulture quite charming!

A lord of land, on his own estate
He lived at a very lively rate,
But his income would bear carousing;
Such acres he had of pasture and heath,
With herbage so rich from the ore beneath,
The very ewe's and lambkin's teeth
Were turned into gold by browsing.

He gave, without any extra thrift,
A flock of sheep for a birthday gift
To each son of his loins, or daughter:
And his debts — if debts he had — at will
He liquidated by giving each bill
A dip in Pactolian water.

'T was said that even his pigs of lead,
By crossing with some by Midas bred,
Made a perfect mine of his piggery.
And as for cattle, one yearling bull
Was worth all Smithfield-market full
Of the golden bulls of Pope Gregory.

The high-bred horses within his stud,
Like human creatures of birth and blood,
Had their golden cups and flagons:
And as for the common husbandry nags,
Their noses were tied in money-bags,
When they stopped with the carts and wagons.

Moreover, he had a golden ass,
Sometimes at stall, and sometimes at grass,
That was worth his own weight in money —

And a golden hive, on a golden bank,
Where golden bees, by alchemical prank,
Gathered gold instead of honey.

Gold! and gold! and gold without end!
He had gold to lay by, and gold to spend,
Gold to give, and gold to lend,
And reversions of gold *in futuro.*
In wealth the family revelled and rolled,
Himself and wife and sons so bold; —
And his daughters sang to their harps of gold
"O bella eta del' oro!"

Such was the tale of the Kilmansegg kin
In golden text on a vellum skin,
Though certain people would wink and grin,
And declare the whole story a parable —
That the ancestor rich was one Jacob Ghrimes,
Who held a long lease, in prosperous times,
Of acres, pasture and arable.

That as money makes money, his golden bees
Were the Five per Cents, or which you please,
When his cash was more than plenty —
That the golden cups were racing affairs;
And his daughters, who sang Italian airs,
Had their golden harps of Clementi.

That the golden ass, or golden bull,
Was English John, with his pockets full,
Then at war by land and water:
While beef, and mutton, and other meat,
Were almost as dear as money to eat,
And farmers reaped golden harvests of wheat
At the Lord knows what per quarter!

Her Birth.

What different dooms our birthdays bring!
For instance, one little manikin thing
  Survives to wear many a wrinkle;
While death forbids another to wake,
And a son that it took nine moons to make
  Expires without even a twinkle:

Into this world we come like ships,
Launched from the docks, and stocks, and slips,
  For fortune fair or fatal;
And one little craft is cast away
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
  While another rides safe at Port Natal.

What different lots our stars accord!
This babe to be hailed and wooed as a lord!
  And that to be shunned like a leper!
One, to the world's wine, honey, and corn,
Another, like Colchester native, born
  To its vinegar, only, and pepper.

One is littered under a roof
Neither wind nor water proof,—
  That 's the prose of Love in a cottage,—
A puny, naked, shivering wretch,
The whole of whose birthright would not fetch,
Though Robins himself drew up the sketch,
  The bid of "a mess of pottage."

Born of Fortunatus's kin,
Another comes tenderly ushered in
  To a prospect all bright and burnished:
No tenant he for life's back slums —
He comes to the world as a gentleman comes
  To a lodging ready furnished.

And the other sex — the tender — the fair —
What wide reverses of fate are there!
Whilst Margaret, charmed by the Bulbul rare,
In a garden of Gul reposes,
Poor Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street
Till — think of that, who find life so sweet! —
She hates the smell of roses!

Not so with the infant Kilmansegg!
She was not born to steal or beg,
Or gather cresses in ditches;
To plait the straw, or bind the shoe,
Or sit all day to hem and sew,
As females must, and not a few —
To fill their insides with stitches!

She was not doomed, for bread to eat,
To be put to her hands as well as her feet —
To carry home linen from mangles —
Or heavy-hearted, and weary-limbed,
To dance on a rope in a jacket trimmed
With as many blows as spangles.

She was one of those who by Fortune's boon
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle:
To speak according to poet's wont,
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,
And Midas rocked the cradle.

At her first *début* she found her head
On a pillow of down, in a downy bed,
With a damask canopy over.
For although by the vulgar popular saw
All mothers are said to be "in the straw,"
Some children are born in clover.

Her very first draught of vital air
It was not the common chameleon fare
  Of plebeian lungs and noses,—
    No — her earliest sniff
    Of this world was a whiff
  Of the genuine Otto of Roses!

When she saw the light, it was no mere ray
Of that light so common, so every-day,
  That the sun each morning launches;
But six wax tapers dazzled her eyes,
From a thing — a gooseberry-bush for size —
  With a golden stem and branches.

She was born exactly at half-past two,
As witnessed a time-piece in or-molu
  That stood on a marble table —
Showing at once the time of day,
And a team of *Gildings* running away
  As fast as they were able,
With a golden god, with a golden star,
And a golden spear, in a golden car,
  According to Grecian fable.

Like other babes, at her birth she cried;
Which made a sensation far and wide,
  Ay, for twenty miles around her;
For though to the ear 't was nothing more
Than an infant's squall, it was really the roar
  Of a fifty-thousand pounder!
    It shook the next heir
    In his library chair,
  And made him cry "Confound her!"

Of signs and omens there was no dearth,
Any more than at Owen Glendower's birth

Or the advent of other great people:
Two bullocks dropped dead,
As if knocked on the head,
And barrels of stout
And ale ran about,
And the village-bells such a peal rang out.
That they cracked the village steeple.

In no time at all, like mushroom spawn,
Tables sprang up all over the lawn;
Not furnished scantily or shabbily,
But on scale as vast
As that huge repast,
With its loads and cargoes
Of drink and botargoes,
At the birth of the babe in Rabelais.

Hundreds of men were turned into beasts,
Like the guests at Circe's horrible feasts,
By the magic of ale and cider:
And each country lass, and each country lad,
Began to caper and dance like mad,
And even some old ones appeared to have had
A bite from the Naples spider.

Then as night came on,
It had scared King John,
Who considered such signs not risible,
To have seen the maroons,
And the whirling moons,
And the serpents of flame,
And wheels of the same,
That according to some were "whizzable."

O, happy Hope of the Kilmanseggs!
Thrice happy in head, and body, and legs,
That her parents had such full pockets!

For had she been born of want and thrift,
For care and nursing all adrift,
It 's ten to one she had had to make shift
With rickets instead of rockets!

And how was the precious baby drest?
In a robe of the East, with lace of the West,
Like one of Crœsus's issue —
Her best bibs were made
Of rich gold brocade,
And the others of silver tissue.

And when the baby inclined to nap
She was lulled on a Gros de Naples lap,
By a nurse in a modish Paris cap,
Of notions so exalted,
She drank nothing lower than Curaçoa,
Maraschino, or pink Noyau,
And on principle never malted.

From a golden boat, with a golden spoon,
The babe was fed night, morning, and noon;
And, although the tale seems fabulous,
'T is said her tops and bottoms were gilt,
Like the oats in that stable-yard palace built
For the horse of Heliogabalus.

And when she took to squall and kick —
For pain will wring and pins will prick
E'en the wealthiest nabob's daughter —
They gave her no vulgar Dalby or gin,
But a liquor with leaf of gold therein,
Videlicet,— Dantzic Water.

In short, she was born, and bred, and nurst
And drest in the best from the very first,
To please the genteelest censor —

And then, as soon as strength would allow,
Was vaccinated, as babes are now,
With virus ta'en from the best-bred cow
  Of Lord Althorpe's — now Earl Spencer.

Her Christening.

Though Shakspeare asks us "What 's in a name?"
(As if cognomens were much the same,)
  There 's really a very great scope in it.
A name? — why, was n't there Doctor Dodd,
That servant at once of Mammon and God,
Who found four thousand pounds and odd,
  A prison — a cart — and a rope in it?

A name? — if the party had a voice,
What mortal would be a Bugg by choice?
As a Hogg, a Grubb, or a Chubb rejoice?
  Or any such nauseous blazon?
Not to mention many a vulgar name,
That would make a door-plate blush for shame,
  If door-plates were not so brazen!

A name? — it has more than nominal worth,
And belongs to good or bad luck at birth —
  As dames of a certain degree know.
In spite of his page's hat and hose,
His page's jacket, and buttons in rows,
Bob only sounds like a page of prose
  Till turned into Rupertino.

Now, to christen the infant Kilmansegg,
For days and days it was quite a plague,
  To hunt the list in the lexicon:
And scores were tried, like coin, by the ring,
Ere names were found just the proper thing,
  For a minor rich as a Mexican.

Then cards were sent, the presence to beg
Of all the kin of Kilmansegg,
White, yellow, and brown relations:
Brothers, wardens of city halls,
And uncles — rich as three golden balls
From taking pledges of nations.

Nephews, whom Fortune seemed to bewitch,
Rising in life like rockets —
Nieces whose doweries knew no hitch —
Aunts as certain of dying rich
As candles in golden sockets —
Cousins German, and cousins' sons,
All thriving and opulent — some had tons
Of Kentish hops in their pockets!

For money had stuck to the race through life
(As it did to the bushel when cash so rife
Posed Ali Baba's brother's wife) —
And, down to the cousins and coz-lings
The fortunate brood of the Kilmanseggs,
As if they had come out of golden eggs,
Were all as wealthy as "goslings."

It would fill a Court Gazette to name
What east and west end people came
To the rite of Christianity;
The lofty lord and the titled dame,
All diamonds, plumes, and urbanity;
The Lordship the Mayor with his golden chain,
And two Gold Sticks, and the sheriffs twain,
Nine foreign counts, and other great men
With their orders or stars, to help M or N
To renounce all pomp and vanity.

To paint the maternal Kilmansegg
The pen of an Eastern poet would beg,

And need an elaborate sonnet;
How she sparkled with gems whenever she stirred,
And her head niddle-noddled at every word,
And seemed so happy, a paradise bird
Had nidificated upon it.

And Sir Jacob the father strutted and bowed,
And smiled to himself, and laughed aloud,
To think of his heiress and daughter —
And then in his pockets he made a grope,
And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,
Seemed washing his hands with invisible soap
In imperceptible water.

He had rolled in money like pigs in mud,
Till it seemed to have entered into his blood
By some occult projection;
And his cheeks, instead of a healthy hue,
As yellow as any guinea grew,
Making the common phrase seem true
About a rich complexion.

And now came the nurse, and during a pause,
Her dead-leaf satin would fitly cause
A very autumnal rustle —
So full of figure, so full of fuss,
As she carried about the babe to buss,
She seemed to be nothing but bustle.

A wealthy Nabob was godpapa,
And an Indian Begum was godmamma,
Whose jewels a queen might covet;
And the priest was a vicar, and dean withal
Of that temple we see with a golden ball,
And a golden cross above it.

The font was a bowl of American gold,
Won by Raleigh in days of old,
In spite of Spanish bravado;
And the book of prayer was so overrun
With gilt devices, it shone in the sun
Like a copy — a presentation one —
Of Humboldt's "El Dorado."

Gold! and gold! and nothing but gold!
The same auriferous shine behold
Wherever the eye could settle!
On the walls — the sideboard — the ceiling-sky —
On the gorgeous footmen standing by,
In coats to delight a miner's eye
With seams of the precious metal.

Gold! and gold! and besides the gold,
The very robe of the infant told
A tale of wealth in every fold,
It lapped her like a vapor!
So fine! so thin! the mind at a loss
Could compare it to nothing except a cross
Of cobweb with bank-note paper.

Then her pearls —'t was a perfect sight, forsooth,
To see them, like "the dew of her youth,"
In such a plentiful sprinkle.
Meanwhile, the vicar read through the form,
And gave her another, not overwarm,
That made her little eyes twinkle.

Then the babe was crossed and blessed amain;
But instead of the Kate, or Ann, or Jane,
Which the humbler female endorses —
Instead of one name, as some people prefix,
Kilmansegg went at the tails of six,
Like a carriage of state with its horses.

O ! then the kisses she got and hugs !
The golden mugs and the golden jugs,
  That lent fresh rays to the midges !
The golden knives, and the golden spoons,
The gems that sparkled like fairy boons,
It was one of the Kilmansegg's own saloons,
  But looked like Rundell and Bridge's !

Gold ! and gold ! the new and the old !
The company ate and drank from gold,
  They revelled, they sang, and were merry;
And one of the Gold Sticks rose from his chair,
And toasted "the lass with the golden hair"
  In a bumper of golden sherry.

Gold ! still gold ! it rained on the nurse,
Who, unlike Danäe, was none the worse;
  There was nothing but guineas glistening !
    Fifty were given to Doctor James,
    For calling the little baby names;
    And for saying Amen !
    The clerk had ten,
  And that was the end of the Christening.

Her Childhood.

Our youth ! our childhood ! that spring of springs !
'T is surely one of the blessedest things
  That nature ever invented !
When the rich are wealthy beyond their wealth
And the poor are rich in spirits and health,
  And all with their lots contented !

There 's little Phelim, he sings like a thrush,
In the self-same pair of patchwork plush,
  With the self-same empty pockets,

That tempted his daddy so often to cut
His throat, or jump in the water-butt —
But what cares Phelim? an empty nut
Would sooner bring tears to their sockets.

Give him a collar without a skirt,—
That 's the Irish linen for shirt;
And a slice of bread, with a taste of dirt,—
That 's poverty's Irish butter;
And what does he lack to make him blest?
Some oyster-shells, or a sparrow's nest,
A candle-end and a gutter.

But, to leave the happy Phelim alone,
Gnawing, perchance, a marrowless bone,
For which no dog would quarrel —
Turn we to little Miss Kilmansegg,
Cutting her first little toothy-peg
With a fifty-guinea coral —
A peg upon which
About poor and rich
Reflection might hang a moral.

Born in wealth, and wealthily nursed,
Capped, papped, napped, and lapped from the first
On the knees of Prodigality,
Her childhood was one eternal round
Of the game of going on Tickler's ground
Picking up gold — in reality.

With extempore carts she never played,
Or the odds and ends of a Tinker's trade,
Or little dirt pies and puddings made,
Like children happy and squalid;
The very puppet she had to pet,
Like a bait for the "Nix my Dolly" set,
Was a dolly of gold — and solid!

Gold! and gold! 't was the burden still!
To gain the heiress's early good will
There was much corruption and bribery;
The yearly cost of her golden toys
Would have given half London's charity-boys
And charity-girls the annual joys
Of a holiday dinner at Highbury.

Bon-bons she ate from the gilt cornet;
And gilded queens on St. Bartlemy's day;
Till her fancy was tinged by her presents—
And first a goldfinch excited her wish,
Then a spherical bowl with its golden fish,
And then two golden pheasants.

Nay, once she squalled and screamed like wild—
And it shows how the bias we give to a child
Is a thing most weighty and solemn:—
But whence was wonder or blame to spring
If little Miss K.—after such a swing—
Made a dust for the flaming gilded thing
On the top of the Fish-street column?

Her Education.

According to metaphysical creed,
To the earliest books that children read
For much good or much bad they are debtors—
But before with their A B C they start,
There are things in morals, as well as art,
That play a very important part—
"Impressions before the letters."

Dame Education begins the pile,
Mayhap in the graceful Corinthian style,
But alas for the elevation!

If the lady's maid or Gossip the nurse
With a load of rubbish, or something worse,
Have made a rotten foundation.

Even thus with little Miss Kilmansegg,
Before she learnt her E for egg,
Ere her governess came, or her masters —
Teachers of quite a different kind
Had "crammed" her beforehand, and put her mind
In a go-cart on golden castors.

Long before her A B and C,
They had taught her by heart her L. S. D.,
And as how she was born a great heiress;
And as sure as London is built of bricks,
My lord would ask her the day to fix
To ride in a fine gilt coach and six,
Like Her Worship the Lady Mayoress.

Instead of stories from Edgeworth's page,
The true golden lore for our golden age,
Or lessons from Barbauld and Trimmer,
Teaching the worth of virtue and health,
All that she knew was the virtue of wealth,
Provided by vulgar nursery stealth
With a book of leaf-gold for a primer.

The very metal of merit they told,
And praised her for being as "good as gold!"
Till she grew as a peacock haughty;
Of money they talked the whole day round,
And weighed desert like grapes by the pound,
Till she had an idea from the very sound
That people with naught were naughty.

They praised — poor children with nothing at all!
Lord! how you twaddle and waddle and squall,
Like common-bred geese and ganders!

What sad little bad little figures you make
To the rich Miss K., whose plainest seed-cake
Was stuffed with corianders!

They praised her falls, as well as her walk,
Flatterers make cream cheese of chalk,
They praised — how they praised — her very small talk,
As if it fell from a Solon!
Or the girl who at each pretty phrase let drop
A ruby comma, or pearl full-stop,
Or an emerald semi-colon.

They praised her spirit, and now and then
The nurse brought her own little "nevy" Ben,
To play with the future mayoress;
And when he got raps, and taps, and slaps,
Scratches and pinches, snips and snaps,
As if from a tigress, or bearess,
They told him how lords would court that hand,
And always gave him to understand,
While he rubbed, poor soul,
His carrotty poll,
That his hair had been pulled by "a *hairess*."

Such were the lessons from maid and nurse,
A governess helped to make still worse,
Giving an appetite so perverse
Fresh diet whereon to batten —
Beginning with A B C to hold
Like a royal playbill printed in gold
On a square of pearl-white satin.

The books to teach the verbs and nouns,
And those about countries, cities and towns,
Instead of their sober drabs and browns,
Were in crimson silk, with gilt edges; —
Her Butler, and Enfield, and Entick — in short,

Her "early lessons" of every sort,
Looked like souvenirs, keepsakes, and pledges.

Old Johnson shone out in as fine array
As he did one night when he went to the play;
Chambaud like a beau of King Charles's day—
Lindley Murray in like conditions;
Each weary, unwelcome, irksome task,
Appeared in a fancy dress and a mask—
If you wish for similar copies, ask
For Howell and James's editions.

Novels she read to amuse her mind,
But always the affluent match-making kind,
That ends with Promessi Sposi,
And a father-in-law so wealthy and grand,
He could give check-mate to Coutts in the Strand;
So, along with a ring and posy,
He endows the bride with Golconda off-hand,
And gives the groom Potosi.

Plays she perused — but she liked the best
Those comedy gentlefolks always possessed
Of fortunes so truly romantic —
Of money so ready that right or wrong
It always is ready to go for a song,
Throwing it, going it, pitching it strong —
They ought to have purses as green and long
As the cucumber called the Gigantic.

Then Eastern tales she loved for the sake
Of the purse of Oriental make,
And the thousand pieces they put in it;
But pastoral scenes on her heart fell cold,
For Nature with her had lost its hold,
No field but the Field of the Cloth of Gold
Would ever have caught her foot in it.

What more? She learnt to sing and dance,
To sit on a horse, although he should prance,
And to speak a French not spoken in France
  Any more than at Babel's building;
And she painted shells, and flowers, and Turks,
But her great delight was in fancy works
  That are done with gold or gilding.

Gold! still gold! — the bright and the dead,
With golden beads, and gold lace, and gold thread,
She worked in gold, as if for her bread;
  The metal had so undermined her,
Gold ran in her thoughts and filled her brain,
She was golden-headed as Peter's cane
  With which he walked behind her.

Her Accident.

The horse that carried Miss Kilmansegg,
And a better never lifted leg,
  Was a very rich bay, called Banker;
A horse of a breed and a metal so rare,—
By Bullion out of an Ingot mare,—
That for action, the best of figures, and air,
  It made many good judges hanker.

And when she took a ride in the park,
Equestrian lord, or pedestrian clerk,
  Was thrown in an amorous fever,
To see the heiress how well she sat,
With her groom behind her, Bob or Nat,
In green, half smothered with gold, and a hat
  With more gold lace than beaver.

And then when Banker obtained a pat,
To see how he arched his neck at that!
  He snorted with pride and pleasure!
Like the steed in the fable so lofty and grand,

Who gave the poor ass to understand
That *he* did n't carry a bag of sand,
  But a burden of golden treasure.

A load of treasure? — alas! alas!
Had her horse but been fed upon English grass,
  And sheltered in Yorkshire spinneys,
Had he scoured the sand with the desert ass,
  Or where the American whinnies —
But a hunter from Erin's turf and gorse,
A regular thorough-bred Irish horse,
Why, he ran away, as a matter of course,
  With a girl worth her weight in guineas!

Mayhap 't is the trick of such pampered nags
To shy at the sight of a beggar in rags,
  But away, like the bolt of a rabbit,
Away went the horse in the madness of fright,
And away went the horsewoman mocking the sight —
Was yonder blue flash a flash of blue light,
  Or only the skirt of her habit?

Away she flies, with the groom behind, —
It looks like a race of the Calmuck kind,
  When Hymen himself is the starter:
And the maid rides first in the four-footed strife,
Riding, striding, as if for her life,
While the lover rides after to catch him a wife,
  Although it 's catching a Tartar.

But the groom has lost his glittering hat!
Though he does not sigh and pull up for that —
Alas! his horse is a tit for tat
  To sell to a very low bidder —
His wind is ruined, his shoulder is sprung;
Things, though a horse be handsome and young,
  A purchaser *will* consider.

But still flies the heiress through stones and dust;
O, for a fall, if fall she must,
On the gentle lap of Flora!
But still, thank Heaven! she clings to her seat —
Away! away! she could ride a dead heat
With the dead who ride so fast and fleet
In the ballad of Leonora!

Away she gallops! — it 's awful work!
It 's faster than Turpin's ride to York,
On Bess, that notable clipper!
She has circled the ring! — she crosses the park!
Mazeppa, although he was stripped so stark,
Mazeppa could n't outstrip her!

The fields seem running away with the folks!
The elms are having a race for the oaks,
At a pace that all jockeys disparages!
All, all is racing! the Serpentine
Seems rushing past like the "arrowy Rhine,"
The houses have got on a railway line,
And are off like the first-class carriages!

She 'll lose her life! she is losing her breath!
A cruel chase, she is chasing Death,
As female shriekings forewarn her:
And now — as gratis as blood of Guelph —
She clears that gate, which has cleared itself
Since then, at Hyde Park Corner!

Alas! for the hope of the Kilmanseggs!
For her head, her brains, her body, and legs,
Her life 's not worth a copper!
Willy-nilly,
In Piccadilly,
A hundred hearts turn sick and chilly,
A hundred voices cry, "Stop her!"

And one old gentleman stares and stands,
Shakes his head and lifts his hands,
And says, "How very improper!"

On and on! — what a perilous run!
The iron rails seem all mingling in one,
To shut out the Green Park scenery!
And now the cellar its dangers reveals,
She shudders — she shrieks — she's doomed, she feels,
To be torn by powers of horses and wheels,
Like a spinner by steam machinery!

Sick with horror she shuts her eyes,
But the very stones seem uttering cries,
As they did to that Persian daughter,
When she climbed up the steep vociferous hill,
Her little silver flagon to fill
With the magical golden water!

"Batter her! shatter her!
Throw and scatter her!"
Shouts each stony-hearted chatterer.
"Dash at the heavy Dover!
Spill her! kill her! tear and tatter her!
Smash her! crash her!" (the stones did n't flatter her!)
"Kick her brains out! let her blood spatter her!
Roll on her over and over!"

For so she gathered the awful sense
Of the street in its past unmacadamized tense,
As the wild horse overran it,—
His four heels making the clatter of six,
Like a devil's tattoo, played with iron sticks
On a kettle-drum of granite!

On! still on! she's dazzled with hints
Of oranges, ribbons, and colored prints,

A kaleidoscope jumble of shapes and tints,
And human faces all flashing,
Bright and brief as the sparks from the flints
That the desperate hoof keeps dashing!

On and on! still frightfully fast!
Dover-street, Bond-street, all are past!
But — yes — no — yes! — they 're down at last!
The Furies and Fates have found them!
Down they go with a sparkle and crash,
Like a bark that 's struck by the lightning flash —
There 's a shriek — and a sob —
And the dense dark mob
Like a billow closes around them!

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

"She breathes!"
"She don't!"
"She 'll recover!"
"She won't!"
"She 's stirring! she 's living, by Nemesis!"
Gold, still gold! on counter and shelf!
Golden dishes as plenty as delf!
Miss Kilmansegg 's coming again to herself
On an opulent goldsmith's premises!

Gold! fine gold! — both yellow and red,
Beaten, and molten — polished, and dead —
To see the gold with profusion spread
In all forms of its manufacture!
But what avails gold to Miss Kilmansegg,
When the femoral bone of her dexter leg
Has met with a compound fracture?

Gold may soothe Adversity's smart;
Nay, help to bind up a broken heart;
But to try it on any other part
  Were as certain a disappointment,
As if one should rub the dish and plate,
Taken out of a Staffordshire crate —
In the hope of a golden service of state —
  With Singleton's "Golden Ointment."

Her Precious Leg.

'As the twig is bent, the tree 's inclined,"
Is an adage often recalled to mind,
  Referring to juvenile bias:
And never so well is the verity seen,
As when to the weak, warped side we lean,
  While life's tempests and hurricanes try us.

Even thus with Miss K. and her broken limb,
By a very, very remarkable whim,
  She showed her early tuition:
While the buds of character came into blow
With a certain tinge that served to show
The nursery culture long ago,
  As the graft is known by fruition!

For the king's physician, who nursed the case,
His verdict gave with an awful face,
  And three others concurred to egg it;
That the patient, to give old Death the slip,
Like the Pope, instead of a personal trip,
  Must send her leg as a legate.

The limb was doomed,— it could n't be saved,—
And like other people the patient behaved,
Nay, bravely that cruel parting braved,

Which makes some persons so falter,
They rather would part, without a groan,
With the flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone,
They obtained at St. George's altar.

But when it came to fitting the stump
With a proxy limb — then flatly and plump
She spoke, in the spirit olden;
She could n't — she should n't — she would n't — have wood!
Nor a leg of cork, if she never stood,
And she swore an oath, or something as good,
The proxy limb should be golden!

A wooden leg! what, a sort of peg,
For your common Jockeys and Jennies!
No, no, her mother might worry and plague —
Weep, go down on her knees, and beg,
But nothing would move Miss Kilmansegg!
She could — she would have a Golden Leg,
If it cost ten thousand guineas!

Wood indeed, in forest or park,
With its sylvan honors and feudal bark,
Is an aristocratical article:
But split and sawn, and hacked about town,
Serving all needs of pauper or clown,
Trod on! staggered on! Wood cut down
Is vulgar — fibre and particle!

And cork! — when the noble cork-tree shades
A lovely group of Castilian maids,
'T is a thing for a song or sonnet! —
But cork, as it stops the bottle of gin,
Or bungs the beer — the *small* beer — in,
It pierced her heart like a corking pin,
To think of standing upon it!

A leg of gold — solid gold throughout,
Nothing else, whether slim or stout,
  Should ever support her, God willing!
She must — she could — she would have her whim,
Her father, she turned a deaf ear to him —
  He might kill her —she did n't mind killing!
He was welcome to cut off her other limb —
  He might cut her all off with a shilling!

All other promised gifts were in vain,
Golden girdle, or golden chain,
She writhed with impatience more than pain,
  And uttered "pshaws!" and "pishes!"
But a leg of gold! as she lay in bed,
It danced before her — it ran in her head!
  It jumped with her dearest wishes!

"Gold — gold — gold! O, let it be gold!"
Asleep or awake that tale she told,
  And when she grew delirious:
Till her parents resolved to grant her wish,
If they melted down plate, and goblet, and dish,
  The case was getting so serious.

So a leg was made in a comely mould,
Of gold, fine virgin glittering gold,
  As solid as man could make it —
Solid in foot, and calf, and shank,
A prodigious sum of money it sank;
In fact, 't was a branch of the family bank,
  And no easy matter to break it.

All sterling metal,— not half-and-half,
The goldsmith's mark was stamped on the calf,—
  'T was pure as from Mexican barter!
And to make it more costly, just over the knee,
Where another ligature used to be,

Was a circle of jewels, worth shillings to see,
A new-fangled badge of the garter!

'T was a splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
Fit for the court of Scander-Beg,
That precious leg of Miss Kilmansegg!
For, thanks to parental bounty,
Secure from mortification's touch,
She stood on a member that cost as much
As a Member for all the County!

Her Fame.

To gratify stern Ambition's whims,
What hundreds and thousands of precious limbs
On a field of battle we scatter!
Severed by sword, or bullet, or saw,
Off they go, all bleeding and raw,—
But the public seems to get the lock-jaw,
So little is said on the matter!

Legs, the tightest that ever were seen,
The tightest, the lightest, that danced on the green
Cutting capers to sweet Kitty Clover;
Shattered, scattered, cut, and bowled down,
Off they go, worse off for renown,
A line in the *Times*, or a talk about town,
Than the leg that a fly runs over!

But the precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg,
That gowden, goolden, golden leg,
Was the theme of all conversation!
Had it been a pillar of church and state,
Or a prop to support the whole dead weight,
It could not have furnished more debate
To the heads and tails of the nation!

East and west, and north and south,
Though useless for either hunger or drouth,—
The Leg was in everybody's mouth,
To use a poetical figure;
Rumor, in taking her ravenous swim,
Saw, and seized on the tempting limb,
Like a shark on the leg of a nigger.

Wilful murder fell very dead;
Debates in the House were hardly read;
In vain the police reports were fed
With Irish riots and *rumpuses* —
The Leg! the Leg! was the great event;
Through every circle in life it went,
Like the leg of a pair of compasses.

The last new novel seemed tame and flat;
The Leg, a novelty newer than that,
Had tripped up the heels of fiction!
It Burked the very essays of Burke,
And, alas! how wealth over wit plays the Turk!
As a regular piece of goldsmith's work,
Got the better of Goldsmith's diction.

"A leg of gold! what, of solid gold?"
Cried rich and poor, and young and old,
And Master and Miss and Madam;
'T was the talk of 'change — the alley — the bank —
And with men of scientific rank
It made as much stir as the fossil shank
Of a lizard coëval with Adam!

Of course with Greenwich and Chelsea elves,
Men who had lost a limb themselves,
Its interest did not dwindle;
But Bill, and Ben, and Jack, and Tom,

Could hardly have spun more yarns therefrom,
If the leg had been a spindle.

Meanwhile the story went to and fro,
Till, gathering like the ball of snow,
By the time it got to Stratford-le-Bow,
Through exaggeration's touches,
The heiress and hope of the Kilmanseggs
Was propped on *two* fine golden legs,
And a pair of golden crutches!

Never had leg so great a run!
'T was the "go" and the "kick" thrown into one!
The mode — the new thing under the sun!
The rage — the fancy — the passion!
Bonnets were named, and hats were worn,
A la golden leg instead of Leghorn,
And stockings and shoes
Of golden hues
Took the lead in the walks of fashion.

The Golden Leg had a vast career,
It was sung and danced — and to show how near
Low folly to lofty approaches,
Down to society's very dregs,
The belles of Wapping wore "Kilmanseggs,"
And St. Giles's beaux sported golden legs
In their pinchbeck pins and brooches!

Her First Step.

Supposing the trunk and limbs of man
Shared, on the allegorical plan,
By the passions that mark humanity,
Whichever might claim the head, or heart,
The stomach, or any other part,
The legs would be seized by Vanity.

There 's Bardus, a six-foot column of fop,
A lighthouse without any light atop,
Whose height would attract beholders,
If he had not lost some inches clear
By looking down at his kerseymere,
Ogling the limbs he holds so dear,
Till he got a stoop in his shoulders.

Talk of art, of science, or books,
And down go the everlasting looks,
To his crural beauties so wedded!
Cry him, whenever you will, you find
His mind in his legs, and his legs in his mind
All prongs and folly — in short, a kind
Of fork — that is fiddle-headed.

What wonder, then, if Miss Kilmansegg,
With a splendid, brilliant, beautiful Leg,
Fit for the court of Scander-Beg,
Disdained to hide it, like Joan or Meg,
In petticoats stuffed or quilted?
Not she! 't was her convalescent whim
To dazzle the world with her precious limb,
Nay, to go a little high-kilted.

So cards were sent for that sort of mob
Where Tartars and Africans hob-and-nob,
And the Cherokee talks of his cab and cob
To Polish or Lapland lovers —
Cards like that hieroglyphical call
To a geographical Fancy Ball
On the recent post-office covers.

For if lion-hunters — and great ones too —
Would mob a savage from Latakoo,
Or squeeze for a glimpse of Prince Le Boo,

That unfortunate Sandwich scion —
Hundreds of first-rate people, no doubt,
Would gladly, madly, rush to a rout,
That promised a Golden Lion!

Her Fancy Ball.

Of all the spirits of evil fame
That hurt the soul or injure the frame,
And poison what 's honest and hearty,
There 's none more needs a Mathew to preach
A cooling, antiphlogistic speech,
To praise and enforce
A temperate course,
Than the Evil Spirit of Party.

Go to the House of Commons, or Lords,
And they seem to be busy with simple words
In their popular sense or pedantic —
But, alas! with their cheers, and sneers, and jeers,
They 're really busy, whatever appears,
Putting peas in each other's ears,
To drive their enemies frantic!

Thus Tories love to worry the Whigs,
Who treat them in turn like Schwalbach pigs,
Giving them lashes, thrashes, and digs,
With their writhing and pain delighted —
But after all that 's said, and more,
The malice and spite of Party are poor
To the malice and spite of a party next door,
To a party not invited.

On with the cap and out with the light,
Weariness bids the world good-night,
At least for the usual season;
But, hark! a clatter of horses' heels;

And Sleep and Silence are broken on wheels,
Like Wilful Murder and Treason!

Another crash — and the carriage goes —
Again poor Weariness seeks the repose
That Nature demands imperious;
But Echo takes up the burden now,
With a rattling chorus of row-de-dow-dow,
Till Silence herself seems making a row,
Like a Quaker gone delirious!

'T is night — a winter night — and the stars
Are shining like winkin' — Venus and Mars
Are rolling along in their golden cars
Through the sky's serene expansion —
But vainly the stars dispense their rays,
Venus and Mars are lost in the blaze
Of the Kilmanseggs' luminous mansion!

Up jumps Fear in a terrible fright!
His bed-chamber windows look so bright,
With light all the square is glutted!
Up he jumps, like a sole from the pan,
And a tremor sickens his inward man,
For he feels as only a gentleman can
Who thinks he 's being "gutted."

Again Fear settles, all snug and warm;
But only to dream of a dreadful storm
From Autumn's sulphurous locker;
But the only electric body that falls
Wears a negative coat and positive smalls,
And draws the peal that so appalls
From the Kilmanseggs' brazen knocker!

'T is Curiosity's benefit night —
And perchance 't is the English second-sight,

But whatever it be, so be it —
As the friends and guests of Miss Kilmansegg
Crowd in to look at her Golden Leg,
As many more
Mob round the door,
To see them going to see it!

In they go — in jackets and cloaks,
Plumes, and bonnets, turbans, and toques,
As if to a Congress of Nations:
Greeks and Malays, with daggers and dirks,
Spaniards, Jews, Chinese, and Turks —
Some like original foreign works,
But mostly like bad translations.

In they go, and to work like a pack,
Juan, Moses, and Shachabac,
Tom, and Jerry, and Springheeled Jack,
For some of low Fancy are lovers —
Skirting, zigzagging, casting about,
Here and there, and in and out,
With a crush, and a rush, for a full-bodied rout
In one of the stiffest of covers.

In they went, and hunted about,
Open-mouthed like chub and trout,
And some with the upper lip thrust out,
Like that fish for routing, a barbel —
While Sir Jacob stood to welcome the crowd,
And rubbed his hands, and smiled aloud,
And bowed, and bowed, and bowed, and bowed
Like a man who is sawing marble.

For princes were there, and noble peers;
Dukes descended from Norman spears;
Earls that dated from early years

And lords in vast variety —
Besides the gentry both new and old —
For people who stand on legs of gold
Are sure to stand well with society.

"But where — where — where?" with one accord
Cried Moses and Mufti, Jack and my Lord,
Wang-Fong and Il Bondocani —
When slow, and heavy, and dead as a dump,
They heard a foot begin to stump,
Thump! lump!
Lump! thump!
Like the spectre in "Don Giovanni!"

And, lo! the heiress, Miss Kilmansegg,
With her splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
In the garb of a goddess olden —
Like chaste Diana going to hunt,
With a golden spear — which of course was blunt
And a tunic looped up to a gem in front,
To show the Leg that was Golden!

Gold! still gold! her Crescent behold,
That should be silver, but would be gold;
And her robe's auriferous spangles!
Her golden stomacher — how she would melt!
Her golden quiver and golden belt,
Where a golden bugle dangles!

And her jewelled garter? O, sin! O, shame
Let Pride and Vanity bear the blame,
That brings such blots on female fame!
But to be a true recorder,
Besides its thin transparent stuff,
The tunic was looped quite high enough
To give a glimpse of the Order!

But what have sin or shame to do
With a Golden Leg — and a stout one, too?
Away with all Prudery's panics!
That the precious metal, by thick and thin,
Will cover square acres of land or sin,
Is a fact made plain
Again, and again,
In morals as well as mechanics.

A few, indeed, of her proper sex,
Who seemed to feel her foot on their necks,
And feared their charms would meet with checks
From so rare and splendid a blazon —
A few cried "fie!" — and "forward" — and "bold!"
And said of the Leg it might be gold,
But to them it looked like brazen!

'T was hard, they hinted, for flesh and blood,
Virtue, and beauty, and all that 's good,
To strike to mere dross their topgallants —
But what were beauty, or virtue, or worth,
Gentle manners, or gentle birth,
Nay, what the most talented head on earth
To a Leg worth fifty Talents!

But the men sang quite another hymn
Of glory and praise to the precious limb —
Age, sordid age, admired the whim,
And its indecorum pardoned —
While half of the young — ay, more than half —
Bowed down and worshipped the Golden Calf,
Like the Jews when their hearts were hardened.

A Golden Leg! what fancies it fired!
What golden wishes and hopes inspired!
To give but a mere abridgment —

What a leg to leg-bail Embarrassment's serf!
What a leg for a leg to take on the turf!
What a leg for a marching regiment!

A Golden Leg! — whatever Love sings,
'T was worth a bushel of "plain gold rings,'
With which the romantic wheedles.
'T was worth all the legs in stockings and socks —
'T was a leg that might be put in the stocks,
N. B.— Not the parish beadle's!

And Lady K. nid-nodded her head,
Lapped in a turban fancy-bred,
Just like a love-apple, huge and red,
Some Mussul-womanish mystery;
But whatever she meant
To represent,
She talked like the Muse of History.

She told how the filial leg was lost;
And then how much the gold one cost;
With its weight to a Trojan fraction.
And how it took off, and how it put on;
And called on Devil, Duke, and Don,
Mahomet, Moses, and Prester John,
To notice its beautiful action.

And then of the Leg she went in quest;
And led it where the light was best;
And made it lay itself up to rest
In postures for painters' studies:
It cost more tricks and trouble, by half,
Than it takes to exhibit a six-legged calf
To a boothful of country cuddies.

Nor yet did the heiress herself omit
The arts that help to make a hit,

And preserve a prominent station.
She talked and laughed far more than her share;
And took a part in "Rich and Rare
Were the Gems she wore"—and the gems were there,
Like a song with an illustration.

She even stood up with a count of France
To dance — alas! the measures we dance
When Vanity plays the piper!
Vanity, Vanity, apt to betray,
And lead all sorts of legs astray,
Wood, or metal, or human clay,—
Since Satan first played the viper!

But first she doffed her hunting gear,
And favored Tom Tug with her golden spear,
To row with down the river —
A Bonze had her golden bow to hold;
A Hermit her belt and bugle of gold;
And an Abbot her golden quiver.

And then a space was cleared on the floor,
And she walked the Minuet de la Cour,
With all the pomp of a Pompadour;
But, although she began *andante*,
Conceive the faces of all the rout,
When she finished off with a whirligig bout,
And the Precious Leg stuck stiffly out
Like the leg of a *figuranté!*

So the courtly dance was goldenly done,
And golden opinions, of course, it won
From all different sorts of people —
Chiming, ding-dong, with flattering phrase,
In one vociferous peal of praise,
Like the peal that rings on royal days
From Loyalty's parish steeple.

And yet, had the leg been one of those
That dance for bread in flesh-colored hose,
With Rosina's pastoral bevy,
The jeers it had met,— the shouts! the scoff!
The cutting advice to "take itself off,"
For sounding but half so heavy.

Had it been a leg like those, perchance,
That teach little girls and boys to dance,
To set, poussette, recede, and advance,
With the steps and figures most proper,—
Had it hopped for a weekly or quarterly sum,
How little of praise or grist would have come
To a mill with such a hopper!

But the Leg was none of those limbs forlorn —
Bartering capers and hops for corn —
That meet with public hisses and scorn,
Or the morning journal denounces —
Had it pleased to caper from morn till dusk,
There was all the music of "Money Musk"
In its ponderous bangs and bounces.

But hark! — as slow as the strokes of a pump,
Lump, thump!
Thump, lump!
As the Giant of Castle Otranto might stump
To a lower room from an upper —
Down she goes with a noisy dint,
For, taking the crimson turban's hint,
A noble lord at the head of the Mint
Is leading the Leg to supper!

But the supper, alas! must rest untold,
With its blaze of light and its glitter of gold,
For to paint that scene of glamour,

It would need the great Enchanter's charm,
Who waves over palace, and cot, and farm,
An arm like the goldbeater's golden arm
That wields a golden hammer.

He — only HE — could fitly state
THE MASSIVE SERVICE OF GOLDEN PLATE.
With the proper phrase and expansion —
The Rare Selection of FOREIGN WINES —
The ALPS OF ICE and MOUNTAINS OF PINES,
The punch in OCEANS and sugary shrines,
The TEMPLE OF TASTE from GUNTER'S DESIGNS —
In short, all that WEALTH with A FEAST combines,
In a SPLENDID FAMILY MANSION.

Suffice it each masked outlandish guest
Ate and drank of the very best,
According to critical conners —
And then they pledged the hostess and host,
But the Golden Leg was the standing toast,
And, as somebody swore,
Walked off with more
Than its share of the "hips!" and honors!

"Miss Kilmansegg! —
Full glasses I beg! —
Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg!"
And away went the bottle carecring!
Wine in bumpers! and shouts in peals!
Till the Clown did n't know his head from his heels,
The Mussulman's eyes danced two-some reels,
And the Quaker was hoarse with cheering!

Her Dream.

Miss Kilmansegg took off her Leg,
And laid it down like a cribbage-peg,

For the rout was done and the riot:
The square was hushed; not a sound was heard;
The sky was gray, and no creature stirred,
Except one little precocious bird,
That chirped — and then was quiet.

So still without,— so still within; —
It had been a sin
To drop a pin —
So intense is silence after a din,
It seemed like Death's rehearsal!
To stir the air no eddy came;
And the taper burnt with as still a flame,
As to flicker had been a burning shame,
In a calm so universal.

The time for sleep had come, at last;
And there was the bed, so soft, so vast,
Quite a field of Bedfordshire clover;
Softer, cooler, and calmer, no doubt,
From the piece of work just ravelled out,
For one of the pleasures of having a rout
Is the pleasure of having it over.

No sordid pallet, or truckle mean,
Of straw, and rug, and tatters unclean;
But a splendid, gilded, carved machine,
That was fit for a royal chamber.
On the top was a gorgeous golden wreath;
And the damask curtains hung beneath,
Like clouds of crimson and amber.

Curtains, held up by two little plump things,
With golden bodies and golden wings,—
Mere fins for such solidities —

Two Cupids, in short,
Of the regular sort,
But the housemaid called them 'Cupidities.'

No patchwork quilt, all seams and scars,
But velvet, powdered with golden stars,
A fit mantle for *Night*-commanders!
And the pillow, as white as snow undimmed,
And as cool as the pool that the breeze has skimmed,
Was cased in the finest cambric, and trimmed
With the costliest lace of Flanders.

And the bed — of the eider's softest down,
'T was a place to revel, to smother, to drown
In a bliss inferred by the poet;
For if ignorance be indeed a bliss,
What blessed ignorance equals this,
To sleep — and not to know it?

O, bed! O, bed! delicious bed!
That heaven upon earth to the weary head;
But a place that to name would be ill-bred,
To the head with a wakeful trouble —
'T is held by such a different lease!
To one, a place of comfort and peace,
All stuffed with the down of stubble geese,
To another with only the stubble!

To one a perfect halcyon nest,
All calm, and balm, and quiet, and rest,
And soft as the fur of the cony —
To another, so restless for body and head,
That the bed seems borrowed from Nettlebed,
And the pillow from Stratford the Stony!

To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,
To the Land of Nod, or where you please;

But alas! for the watchers and weepers,
Who turn, and turn, and turn again,
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,
With an anxious brain,
And thoughts in a train
That does not run upon *sleepers!*

Wide awake as the mousing owl,
Night-hawk, or other nocturnal fowl,—
But more profitless vigils keeping,—
Wide awake in the dark they stare,
Filling with phantoms the vacant air,
As if that crook-backed tyrant Care
Had plotted to kill them sleeping.

And O! when the blessed diurnal light
Is quenched by the providential night,
To render our slumber more certain,
Pity, pity the wretches that weep,
For they must be wretched who cannot sleep
When God himself draws the curtain!

The careful Betty the pillow beats,
And airs the blankets, and smooths the sheets,
And gives the mattress a shaking —
But vainly Betty performs her part,
If a ruffled head and a rumpled heart
As well as the couch want making.

There 's Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and nerves,
Where other people would make preserves,
He turns his fruits into pickles:
Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,
At night, to his own sharp fancies a prey,
He lies like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way,
Tormenting himself with his prickles.

But a child — that bids the world good-night,
In downright earnest, and cuts it quite —
A cherub no art can copy,—
'T is a perfect picture to see him lie
As if he had supped on dormouse pie,
(An ancient classical dish, by the by)
With sauce of syrup of poppy.

O, bed! bed! bed! delicious bed!
That heaven upon earth to the weary head,
Whether lofty or low its condition!
But, instead of putting our plagues on shelves,
In our blankets how often we toss ourselves,
Or are tossed by such allegorical elves
As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition!

The independent Miss Kilmansegg
Took off her independent Leg
And laid it beneath her pillow,
And then on the bed her frame she cast;
The time for repose had come at last,
But long, long after the storm is past
Rolls the turbid, turbulent billow.

No part she had in vulgar cares
That belong to common household affairs —
Nocturnal annoyances such as theirs
Who lie with a shrewd surmising
That while they are couchant (a bitter cup!)
Their bread and butter are getting up,
And the coals — confound them! — are rising.

No fear she had her sleep to postpone,
Like the crippled widow who weeps alone,
And cannot make a doze her own,
For the dread that mayhap on the morrow,

The true and Christian reading to balk,
A broker will take up her bed and walk,
By way of curing her sorrow.

No cause like these she had to bewail:
But the breath of applause had blown a gale,
And winds from that quarter seldom fail
To cause some human commotion;
But whenever such breezes coincide
With the very spring-tide
Of human pride,
There 's no such swell on the ocean!

Peace, and ease, and slumber lost,
She turned, and rolled, and tumbled, and tossed,
With a tumult that would not settle:
A common case, indeed, with such
As have too little, or think too much,
Of the precious and glittering metal.

Gold! — she saw at her golden foot
The peer whose tree had an olden root,
The proud, the great, the learned to boot,
The handsome, the gay, and the witty —
The man of science — of arms — of art,
The man who deals but at Pleasure's mart,
And the man who deals in the city.

Gold, still gold — and true to the mould!
In the very scheme of her dream it told;
For, by magical transmutation,
From her Leg through her body it seemed to go,
Till, gold above, and gold below,
She was gold, all gold, from her little gold toe
To her organ of Veneration!

And still she retained, through Fancy's art,
The golden bow, and the golden dart,
With which she had played a goddess's part
In her recent glorification.
And still, like one of the self-same brood,
On a plinth of the self-same metal she stood
For the whole world's adoration.

And hymns of incense around her rolled,
From golden harps and censers of gold,—
For Fancy in dreams is as uncontrolled
As a horse without a bridle:
What wonder, then, from all checks exempt,
If, inspired by the Golden Leg, she dreamt
She was turned to a golden idol?

Her Courtship.

When, leaving Eden's happy land,
The grieving angel led by the hand
Our banished father and mother,
Forgotten, amid their awful doom,
The tears, the fears, and the future's gloom,
On each brow was a wreath of Paradise bloom,
That our parents had twined for each other.

It was only while sitting like figures of stone,
For the grieving angel had skyward flown,
As they sat, those two, in the world alone,
With disconsolate hearts nigh cloven,
That, scenting the gust of happier hours,
They looked around for the precious flowers,
And, lo!—a last relic of Eden's dear bowers—
The chaplet that Love had woven!

And still, when a pair of lovers meet,
There 's a sweetness in air, unearthly sweet,

That savors still of that happy retreat
  Where Eve by Adam was courted:
Whilst the joyous thrush, and the gentle dove,
Wooed their mates in the boughs above,
  And the serpent, as yet, only sported.

Who hath not felt that breath in the air,
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,
A warmth in the light, and a bliss everywhere,
  When young hearts yearn together?
All sweets below, and all sunny above,
O! there 's nothing in life like making love,
  Save making hay in fine weather!

Who hath not found amongst his flowers
A blossom too bright for this world of ours,
  Like a rose among snows of Sweden?
But, to turn again to Miss Kilmansegg,
Where must Love have gone to beg,
If such a thing as a Golden Leg
  Had put its foot in Eden?

And yet — to tell the rigid truth —
Her favor was sought by age and youth —
  For the prey will find a prowler!
She was followed, flattered, courted, addressed,
Wooed, and cooed, and wheedled, and pressed,
By suitors from North, South, East, and West.
  Like that heiress, in song, Tibbie Fowler!

But, alas! alas! for the woman's fate,
Who has from a mob to choose a mate!
  'T is a strange and painful mystery!
But the more the eggs, the worse the hatch;
The more the fish, the worse the catch;
The more the sparks, the worse the match;
  Is a fact in woman's history.

Give her between a brace to pick,
And, mayhap, with luck to help the trick,
She will take the Faustus, and leave the Old Nick —
  But, her future bliss to baffle,
Amongst a score let her have a voice,
And she 'll have as little cause to rejoice
As if she had won the " man of her choice "
  In a matrimonial raffle !

Thus, even thus, with the heiress and hope,
Fulfilling the adage of too much rope,
  With so ample a competition,
She chose the least worthy of all the group,
Just as the vulture makes a stoop,
And singles out from the herd or troop
  The beast of the worst condition.

A foreign count — who came incog.,
Not under a cloud, but under a fog,
  In a Calais packet's fore-cabin,
To charm some lady British-born,
With his eyes as black as the fruit of the thorn,
And his hooky nose, and his beard half-shorn,
  Like a half-converted Rabbin.

And because the sex confess a charm
In the man who has slashed a head or arm,
  Or has been a throat's undoing,
He was dressed like one of the glorious trade,
At least when glory is off parade,
With a stock, and a frock, well trimmed with braid
  And frogs — that went a-wooing.

Moreover, as counts are apt to do,
On the left-hand side of his dark surtout,
At one of those holes that buttons go through,

(To be a precise recorder),
A ribbon he wore, or rather a scrap,
About an inch of ribbon mayhap,
That one of his rivals, a whimsical chap,
Described as his "Retail Order."

And then — and much it helped his chance —
He could sing, and play first fiddle, and dance,
Perform charades and proverbs of France —
Act the tender, and do the cruel;
For amongst his other killing parts,
He had broken a brace of female hearts,
And murdered three men in duel!

Savage at heart, and false of tongue,
Subtle with age, and smooth to the young,
Like a snake in his coiling and curling —
Such was the count — to give him a niche —
Who came to court that heiress rich,
And knelt at her foot — one need n't say which —
Besieging her castle of *Sterling*.

With prayers and vows he opened his trench,
And plied her with English, Spanish, and French,
In phrases the most sentimental!
And quoted poems in high and low Dutch,
With now and then an Italian touch,
Till she yielded, without resisting much,
To homage so continental.

And then, the sordid bargain to close,
With a miniature sketch of his hooky nose,
And his dear dark eyes, as black as sloes,
And his beard and whiskers as black as those,
The lady's consent he requited —
And instead of the lock that lovers beg,
The count received from Miss Kilmansegg

A model, in small, of her Precious Leg —
And so the couple were plighted!

But, O! the love that gold must crown!
Better — better, the love of the clown,
Who admires his lass in her Sunday gown,
As if all the fairies had dressed her!
Whose brain to no crooked thought gives birth,
Except that he never will part on earth
With his true love's crooked tester!

Alas! for the love that 's linked with gold!
Better — better a thousand times told —
More honest, happy, and laudable,
The downright loving of pretty Cis,
Who wipes her lips, though there 's nothing amiss,
And takes a kiss, and gives a kiss,
In which her heart is audible!

Pretty Cis, so smiling and bright,
Who loves as she labors, with all her might,
And without any sordid leaven!
Who blushes as red as haws and hips,
Down to her very finger-tips,
For Roger's blue ribbons — to her, like strips
Cut out of the azure of heaven!

Her Marriage.

'T was morn — a most auspicious one!
From the golden East the golden sun
Came forth his glorious race to run,
Through clouds of most splendid tinges;
Clouds that lately slept in shade,
But now seemed made
Of gold brocade,
With magnificent golden fringes.

Gold above, and gold below,
The earth reflected the golden glow,
From river, and hill, and valley;
Gilt by the golden light of morn,
The Thames — it looked like the Golden Horn.
And the barge that carried coal or corn
Like Cleopatra's galley!

Bright as a cluster of golden-rod,
Suburban poplars began to nod,
With extempore splendor furnished;
While London was bright with glittering clocks,
Golden dragons, and golden cocks,
And above them all,
The dome of St. Paul,
With its golden cross and its golden ball,
Shone out as if newly burnished!

And, lo! for golden hours and joys,
Troops of glittering golden boys
Danced along with a jocund noise,
And their gilded emblems carried!
In short, 't was the year's most golden day,
By mortals called the first of May,
When Miss Kilmansegg,
Of the Golden Leg,
With a golden ring was married!

And thousands of children, women, and men,
Counted the clock from eight till ten,
From St. James's sonorous steeple,
For, next to that interesting job,
The hanging of Jack, or Bill, or Bob,
There 's nothing so draws a London mob
As the noosing of very rich people.

And a treat it was for a mob to behold
The bridal carriage that blazed with gold!
And the footmen tall, and the coachman bold,
In liveries so resplendent —
Coats you wondered to see in place,
They seemed so rich with golden lace,
That they might have been independent.

Coats that made those menials proud
Gaze with scorn on the dingy crowd,
From their gilded elevations;
Not to forget that saucy lad
(Ostentation's favorite cad),
The page, who looked, so splendidly clad,
Like a page of the "Wealth of Nations."

But the coachman carried off the state,
With what was a Lancashire body of late
Turned into a Dresden Figure;
With a bridal nosegay of early bloom,
About the size of a birchen broom,
And so huge a white favor, had Gog been groom,
He need not have worn a bigger.

And then to see the groom! the count!
With foreign orders to such an amount,
And whiskers so wild — nay, bestial;
He seemed to have borrowed the shaggy hair
As well as the stars of the Polar Bear,
To make him look celestial!

And then — Great Jove! — the struggle, the crush
The screams, the heaving, the awful rush,
The swearing, the tearing, and fighting,—
The hats and bonnets smashed like an egg,—
To catch a glimpse of the Golden Leg,

Which, between the steps and Miss Kilmansegg,
Was fully displayed in alighting!

From the golden ankle up to the knee
There it was for the mob to see!
A shocking act had it chanced to be
A crooked leg or a skinny:
But although a magnificent veil she wore,
Such as never was seen before,
In case of blushes, she blushed no more
Than George the First on a guinea!

Another step, and, lo! she was launched!
All in white, as brides are *blanched*,
With a wreath of most wonderful splendor —
Diamonds, and pearls, so rich in device,
That, according to calculation nice,
Her head was worth as royal a price
As the head of the Young Pretender.

Bravely she shone — and shone the more
As she sailed through the crowd of squalid and poor
Thief, beggar, and tatterdemalion —
Led by the count, with his sloe-black eyes
Bright with triumph, and some surprise,
Like Anson on making sure of his prize
The famous Mexican galleon!

Anon came Lady K., with her face
Quite made up to act with grace,
But she cut the performance shorter
For instead of pacing stately and stiff,
At the stare of the vulgar she took a miff
And ran, full speed, into church, as if
To get married before her daughter.

But Sir Jacob walked more slowly, and bowed
Right and left to the gaping crowd,
  Wherever a glance was seizable;
For Sir Jacob thought he bowed like a Guelph,
And therefore bowed to imp and elf,
And would gladly have made a bow to himself,
  Had such a bow been feasible.

And last — and not the least of the sight,
Six "Handsome Fortunes," all in white,
Came to help in the marriage rite,—
  And rehearse their own hymeneals;
And then, the bright procession to close,
They were followed by just as many beaux,
  Quite fine enough for ideals.

Glittering men, and splendid dames,
Thus they entered the porch of St. James,
  Pursued by a thunder of laughter;
For the beadle was forced to intervene,
For Jim the Crow, and his Mayday Queen,
With her gilded ladle, and Jack i' the Green,
  Would fain have followed after!

Beadle-like he hushed the shout;
But the temple was full "inside and out,"
And a buzz kept buzzing all round about
  Like bees when the day is sunny —
A buzz universal that interfered
With the rite that ought to have been revered,
As if the couple already were smeared
  With Wedlock's treacle and honey!

Yet Wedlock 's a very awful thing!
'T is something like that feat in the ring
  Which requires good nerve to do it —

When one of a "Grand Equestrian Troop"
Makes a jump at a gilded hoop,
Not certain at all
Of what may befall
After his getting through it!

But the count he felt the nervous work
No more than any polygamous Turk,
Or bold piratical skipper,
Who, during his buccaneering search,
Would as soon engage "a hand" in church
As a hand on board his clipper!

And how did the bride perform her part?
Like any bride who is cold at heart,
Mere snow with the ice's glitter;
What but a life of winter for her!
Bright but chilly, alive without stir,
So splendidly comfortless,—just like a fir
When the frost is severe and bitter.

Such were the future man and wife!
Whose bale or bliss to the end of life
A few short words were to settle —
Wilt thou have this woman?
I will — and then,
Wilt thou have this man?
I will, and Amen —
And those two were one flesh, in the angels' ken,
Except one Leg — that was metal.

Then the names were signed — and kissed the kiss:
And the bride, who came from her coach a miss,
As a countess walked to her carriage —
Whilst Hymen preened his plumes like a dove,
And Cupid fluttered his wings above,

In the shape of a fly — as little a Love
As ever looked in at a marriage!

Another crash — and away they dashed,
And the gilded carriage and footmen flashed
From the eyes of the gaping people —
Who turned to gaze at the toe-and-heel
Of the golden boys beginning a reel,
To the merry sound of a wedding-peal
From St. James's musical steeple.

Those wedding-bells! those wedding-bells!
How sweetly they sound in pastoral dells
From a tower in an ivy-green jacket!
But town-made joys how dearly they cost;
And after all are tumbled and tost,
Like a peal from a London steeple, and lost
In town-made riot and racket.

The wedding-peal, how sweetly it peals
With grass or heather beneath our heels,—
For bells are Music's laughter! —
But a London peal, well mingled, be sure,
With vulgar noises and voices impure,
What a harsh and discordant overture
To the harmony meant to come after!

But hence with Discord — perchance, too soon
To cloud the face of the honeymoon
With a dismal occultation! —
Whatever Fate's concerted trick,
The countess and count, at the present nick,
Have a chicken and not a crow to pick
At a sumptuous cold collation.

A breakfast — no unsubstantial mess,
But one in the style of good Queen Bess,
Who — hearty as hippocampus —

Broke her fast with ale and beef,
Instead of toast and the Chinese leaf,
And in lieu of anchovy — grampus!

A breakfast of fowl, and fish, and flesh,
Whatever was sweet, or salt, or fresh,
With wines the most rare and curious —
Wines, of the richest flavor and hue;
With fruits from the worlds both Old and New;
And fruits obtained before they were due
At a discount most usurious.

For wealthy palates there be, that scout
What is *in* season, for what is *out*,
And prefer all precocious savor;
For instance, early green peas, of the sort
That costs some four or five guineas a quart;
Where the *Mint* is the principal flavor.

And many a wealthy man was there,
Such as the wealthy city could spare,
To put in a portly appearance —
Men whom their fathers had helped to gild:
And men who had had their fortunes to build,
And — much to their credit — had richly filled
Their purses by *pursy-verance.*

Men, by popular rumor at least,
Not the last to enjoy a feast!
And truly they were not idle!
Luckier far than the chestnut tits,
Which, down at the door, stood champing their bits,
At a different sort of bridle.

For the time was come — and the whiskered count
Helped his bride in the carriage to mount,
And fain would the Muse deny it,

But the crowd, including two butchers in blue,
(The regular killing Whitechapel hue,)
Of her Precious Calf had as ample a view,
As if they had come to buy it!

Then away! away! with all the speed
That golden spurs can give to the steed,—
Both yellow boys and guineas, indeed,
Concurred to urge the cattle,—
Away they went, with favors white,
Yellow jackets, and pannels bright,
And left the mob, like a mob at night,
Agape at the sound of a rattle.

Away! away! they rattled and rolled,
The count, and his bride, and her Leg of Gold —
That faded charm to the charmer!
Away,— through Old Brentford rang the din,
Of wheels and heels, on their way to win
That hill, named after one of her kin
The Hill of the Golden Farmer!

Gold, still gold — it flew like dust!
It tipped the post-boy, and paid the trust;
In each open palm it was freely thrust;
There was nothing but giving and taking!
And if gold could insure the future hour,
What hopes attended that bride to her bower;
But, alas! even hearts with a four-horse power
Of opulence end in breaking!

Her Honeymoon.

The moon — the moon, so silver and cold,
Her fickle temper has oft been told,
Now shady — now bright and sunny —
But, of all the lunar things that change,
The one that shows most fickle and strange,

And takes the most eccentric range,
  Is the moon — so called — of honey!

To some a full-grown orb revealed,
As big and as round as Norval's shield,
  And as bright as a burner Bude-lighted;
To others as dull, and dingy, and damp,
As any oleaginous lamp,
Of the regular old parochial stamp,
  In a London fog benighted.

To the loving, a bright and constant sphere,
That makes earth's commonest scenes appear
  All poetic, romantic, and tender;
Hanging with jewels a cabbage-stump,
And investing a common post, or a pump,
A currant-bush or a gooseberry clump,
  With a halo of dreamlike splendor.

A sphere such as shone from Italian skies,
In Juliet's dear, dark, liquid eyes,
  Tipping trees with its argent braveries —
And to couples not favored with Fortune's boons
One of the most delightful of moons,
For it brightens their pewter platters and spoons
  Like a silver service of Savory's!

For all is bright, and beauteous, and clear,
And the meanest thing most precious and dear,
  When the magic of love is present:
Love, that lends a sweetness and grace
To the humblest spot and the plainest face —
That turns Wilderness Row into Paradise Place,
  And Garlic Hill to Mount Pleasant!

Love that sweetens sugarless tea,
And makes contentment and joy agree

With the coarsest boarding and bedding;
Love, that no golden ties can attach,
But nestles under the humblest thatch,
And will fly away from an emperor's match
To dance at a penny wedding!

O, happy, happy, thrice happy state,
When such a bright planet governs the fate
Of a pair of united lovers!
'T is theirs, in spite of the serpent's hiss,
To enjoy the pure primeval kiss
With as much of the old original bliss
As mortality ever recovers!

There 's strength in double joints, no doubt,
In double X Ale, and Dublin Stout,
That the single sorts know nothing about —
And a fist is strongest when doubled —
And double aqua-fortis, of course,
And double soda-water, perforce,
Are the strongest that ever bubbled!

There 's double beauty whenever a swan
Swims on a lake, with her double thereon;
And ask the gardener, Luke or John,
Of the beauty of double-blowing —
A double dahlia delights the eye;
And it 's far the loveliest sight in the sky
When a double rainbow is glowing!

There 's warmth in a pair of double soles;
As well as a double allowance of coals —
In a coat that is double-breasted —
In double windows and double doors;
And a double U wind is blest by scores
For its warmth to the tender-chested.

There 's two-fold sweetness in double-pipes;
And a double barrel and double snipes
  Give the sportsman a duplicate pleasure:
There 's double safety in double locks;
And double letters bring cash for the box;
And all the world knows that double knocks
  Are gentility's double measure.

There 's a double sweetness in double rhymes,
And a double at whist and a double Times
  In profit are certainly double —
By doubling, the hare contrives to escape:
And all seamen delight in a doubled cape,
  And a double-reefed topsail in trouble.

There 's a double chuck at a double chin,
And of course there 's a double pleasure therein,
  If the parties are brought to telling:
And, however our Dennises take offence,
A double meaning shows double sense;
    And if proverbs tell truth,
    A double tooth
  Is Wisdom's adopted dwelling!

But double wisdom, and pleasure, and sense,
Beauty, respect, strength, comfort, and thence
  Through whatever the list discovers,
They are all in the double blessedness summed
Of what was formerly double-drummed,
  The marriage of two true lovers!

Now the Kilmansegg Moon — it must be told —
Though instead of silver it tipped with gold
Shone rather wan, and distant, and cold,
  And, before its days were at thirty,
Such gloomy clouds began to collect,

With an ominous ring of ill effect,
As gave but too much cause to expect
Such weather as seamen call dirty!

And yet the moon was the "young May moon,"
And the scented hawthorn had blossomed soon,
And the thrush and the blackbird were singing —
The snow-white lambs were skipping in play,
And the bee was humming a tune all day
To flowers as welcome as flowers in May,
And the trout in the stream was springing!

But what were the hues of the blooming earth,
Its scents — its sounds — or the music and mirth,
Or its furred or its feathered creatures,
To a pair in the world's last sordid stage,
Who had never looked into Nature's page,
And had strange ideas of a Golden Age,
Without any Arcadian features?

And what were joys of the pastoral kind
To a bride — town-made — with a heart and mind
With simplicity ever at battle?
A bride of an ostentatious race,
Who, thrown in the Golden Farmer's place,
Would have trimmed her shepherds with golden lace,
And gilt the horns of her cattle.

She could not please the pigs with her whim,
And the sheep would n't cast their eyes at a limb
For which she had been such a martyr:
The deer in the park, and the colts at grass,
And the cows, unheeded let it pass;
And the ass on the common was such an ass,
That he would n't have swapped
The thistle he cropped
For her Leg, including the Garter!

She hated lanes, and she hated fields —
She hated all that the country yields —
And barely knew turnips from clover:
She hated walking in any shape,
And a country stile was an awkward scrape,
Without the bribe of a mob to gape
At the Leg in clambering over!

O blessed Nature, "O rus! O rus!"
Who cannot sigh for the country thus,
Absorbed in a worldly torpor —
Who does not yearn for its meadow-sweet breath,
Untainted by care, and crime, and death,
And to stand sometimes upon grass or heath —
That soul, spite of gold, is a pauper!

But to hail the pearly advent of Morn,
And relish the odor fresh from the thorn,
She was far too pampered a madam —
Or to joy in the daylight waxing strong,
While, after ages of sorrow and wrong,
The scorn of the proud, the misrule of the strong,
And all the woes that to man belong,
The lark still carols the self-same song
That he did to the uncurst Adam!

The Lark! she had given all Leipsic's flocks
For a Vauxhall tune in a musical box;
And as for the birds in the thicket,
Thrush or ousel in leafy niche,
The linnet or finch, she was far too rich
To care for a morning concert to which
She was welcome without any ticket.

Gold, still gold, her standard of old,
All pastoral joys were tried by gold,
Or by fancies golden and crural —

Till ere she had passed one week unblest,
As her agricultural uncle's guest,
Her mind was made up and fully imprest
That felicity could not be rural!

And the count? — to the snow-white lambs at play,
And all the scents and the sights of May,
And the birds that warbled their passion,
His ears, and dark eyes, and decided nose,
Were as deaf and as blind and as dull as those
That overlook the Bouquet de Rose,
The Huile Antique,
And Parfum Unique,
In a barber's Temple of Fashion.

To tell, indeed, the true extent
Of his rural bias, so far it went
As to covet estates in ring fences —
And for rural lore he had learned in town
That the country was green turned up with brown,
And garnished with trees that a man might cut down
Instead of his own expenses.

And yet, had that fault been his only one,
The pair might have had few quarrels or none,
For their tastes thus far were in common;
But faults he had that a haughty bride
With a Golden Leg could hardly abide —
Faults that would even have roused the pride
Of a far less metalsome woman!

It was early days indeed for a wife,
In the very spring of her married life,
To be chilled by its wintry weather —
But, instead of sitting as love-birds do,
Or Hymen's turtles that bill and coo —

Enjoying their "moon and honey for two,"
They were scarcely seen together!

In vain she sat with her Precious Leg
A little exposed *à la* Kilmansegg,
And rolled her eyes in their sockets!
He left her in spite of her tender regards,
And those loving murmurs described by bards,
For the rattling of dice and the shuffling of cards,
And the poking of balls into pockets!

Moreover he loved the deepest stake
And the heaviest bets the players would make;
And he drank — the reverse of sparely,—
And he used strange curses that made her fret;
And when he played with herself at piquet,
She found, to her cost,
For she always lost,
That the count did not count quite fairly.

And then came dark mistrust and doubt,
Gathered by worming his secrets out,
And slips in his conversations —
Fears, which all her peace destroyed,
That his title was null — his coffers were void —
And his French château was in Spain, or enjoyed
The most airy of situations.

But still his heart — if he had such a part —
She — only she — might possess his heart,
And hold his affections in fetters —
Alas! that hope, like a crazy ship,
Was forced its anchor and cable to slip
When, seduced by her fears, she took a dip
In his private papers and letters.

Letters that told of dangerous leagues;
And notes that hinted as many intrigues
As the count's in the "Barber of Seville" —
In short, such mysteries came to light,
That the countess-bride, on the thirtieth night,
Woke and started up in affright,
And kicked and screamed with all her might,
And finally fainted away outright,
For she dreamt she had married the Devil!

Her Misery.

Who hath not met with home-made bread,
A heavy compound of putty and lead —
And home-made wines that rack the head,
And home-made liqueurs and waters?
Home-made pop that will not foam,
And home-made dishes that drive one from home,
Not to name each mess,
For the face or dress,
Home-made by the homely daughters?

Home-made physic, that sickens the sick;
Thick for thin and thin for thick; —
In short, each homogeneous trick
For poisoning domesticity?
And since our Parents, called the First,
A little family squabble nurst,
Of all our evils the worst of the worst
Is home-made infelicity.

There 's a golden bird that claps its wings,
And dances for joy on its perch, and sings
With a Persian exultation:
For the sun is shining into the room,
And brightens up the carpet-bloom.

As if it were new, bran-new from the loom,
Or the lone nun's fabrication.

And thence the glorious radiance flames
On pictures in massy gilded frames —
Enshrining, however, no painted dames,
But portraits of colts and fillies —
Pictures hanging on walls which shine,
In spite of the bard's familiar line,
With clusters of "gilded lilies."

And still the flooding sunlight shares
Its lustre with gilded sofas and chairs,
That shine as if freshly burnished —
And gilded tables, with glittering stocks
Of gilded china, and golden clocks,
Toy, and trinket, and musical box,
That Peace and Paris have furnished.

And, lo! with the brightest gleam of all
The glowing sunbeam is seen to fall
On an object as rare as splendid —
The golden foot of the Golden Leg
Of the countess — once Miss Kilmansegg —
But there all sunshine is ended.

Her cheek is pale, and her eye is dim,
And downward cast, yet not at the limb,
Once the centre of all speculation;
But downward drooping in comfort's dearth,
As gloomy thoughts are drawn to the earth —
Whence human sorrows derive their birth —
By a moral gravitation.

Her golden hair is out of its braids,
And her sighs betray the gloomy shades
That her evil planet revolves in —

And tears are falling that catch a gleam
So bright as they drop in the sunny beam,
That tears of *aqua regia* they seem
The water that gold dissolves in!

Yet, not in filial grief were shed
Those tears for a mother's insanity;
Nor yet because her father was dead,
For the bowing Sir Jacob had bowed his head
To Death — with his usual urbanity;
The waters that down her visage rilled
Were drops of unrectified spirit distilled
From the limbec of Pride and Vanity.

Tears that fell alone and uncheckt,
Without relief, and without respect,
Like the fabled pearls that the pigs neglect,
When pigs have that opportunity —
And of all the griefs that mortals share,
The one that seems the hardest to bear
Is the grief without community.

How blessed the heart that has a friend
A sympathizing ear to lend
To troubles too great to smother!
For as ale and porter, when flat, are restored
Till a sparkling, bubbling head they afford,
So sorrow is cheered by being poured
From one vessel into another.

But friend or gossip she had not one
To hear the vile deeds that the count had done,
How night after night he rambled;
And how she had learned by sad degrees
That he drank, and smoked, and, worse than these,
That he "swindled, intrigued, and gambled."

How he kissed the maids, and sparred with John;
And came to bed with his garments on;
With other offences as heinous —
And brought *strange* gentlemen home to dine,
That he said were in the Fancy line,
And they fancied spirits instead of wine,
And called her lap-dog "Wenus!"

Of "making a book" how he made a stir,
But never had written a line to her,
Once his idol and Cara Sposa:
And how he had stormed, and treated her ill,
Because she refused to go down to a mill,
She did n't know where, but remembered still
That the miller's name was Mendoza.

How often he waked her up at night,
And oftener still by the morning light,
Reeling home from his haunts unlawful;
Singing songs that should n't be sung,
Except by beggars and thieves unhung —
Or volleying oaths, that a foreign tongue
Made still more horrid and awful!

How oft, instead of otto of rose,
With vulgar smells he offended her nose,
From gin, tobacco, and onion!
And then how wildly he used to stare!
And shake his fist at nothing, and swear,—
And pluck by the handful his shaggy hair,
Till he looked like a study of Giant Despair
For a new edition of Bunyan!

For dice will run the contrary way,
As well is known to all who play,
And cards will conspire as in treason:
And what with keeping a hunting-box,

Following fox—
Friends in flocks,
Burgundies, Hocks,
From London Docks;
Stultz's frocks,
Manton and Nock's
Barrels and locks,
Shooting blue rocks,
Trainers and jocks,
Buskins and socks,
Pugilistical knocks,
And fighting-cocks,
If he found himself short in funds and stocks,
These rhymes will furnish the reason!

His friends, indeed, were falling away—
Friends who insist on play or pay—
And he feared at no very distant day
To be cut by Lord and by Cadger,
As one who was gone or going to smash,
For his checks no longer drew the cash,
Because, as his comrades explained in flash,
"He had overdrawn his badger."

Gold! gold—alas! for the gold
Spent where souls are bought and sold,
In Vice's Walpurgis revel!
Alas! for muffles, and bulldogs, and guns,
The leg that walks, and the leg that runs,
All real evils, though Fancy ones,
When they lead to debt, dishonor, and duns,
Nay, to death, and perchance the Devil!

Alas! for the last of a Golden race!
Had she cried her wrongs in the market-place,
She had warrant for all her clamor—

For the worst of rogues, and brutes, and rakes,
Was breaking her heart by constant aches,
With as little remorse as the pauper who breaks
A flint with a parish hammer!

Her Last Will.

Now the Precious Leg, while cash was flush,
Or the count's acceptance worth a rush,
Had never excited dissension;
But no sooner the stocks began to fall,
Than, without any ossification at all,
The limb became what people call
A perfect bone of contention.

For altered days brought altered ways,
And instead of the complimentary phrase,
So current before her bridal —
The countess heard, in language low,
That her Precious Leg was precious slow,
A good 'un to look at but bad to go,
And kept quite a sum lying idle.

That instead of playing musical airs,
Like Colin's foot in going up-stairs —
As the wife in the Scottish ballad declares —
It made an infernal stumping.
Whereas a member of cork, or wood,
Would be lighter and cheaper, and quite as good,
Without the unbearable thumping.

Perhaps she thought it a decent thing
To show her calf to cobbler and king,
But nothing could be absurder —
While none but the crazy would advertise
Their gold before their servants' eyes,

Who of course some night would make it a prize,
By a shocking and barbarous murder.

But spite of hint, and threat, and scoff,
The Leg kept its situation:
For legs are not to be taken off
By a verbal amputation.
And mortals when they take a whim,
The greater the folly the stiffer the limb
That stands upon it or by it—
So the countess, then Miss Kilmansegg,
At her marriage refused to stir a peg,
Till the lawyers had fastened on her leg,
As fast as the law could tie it.

Firmly then—and more firmly yet—
With scorn for scorn, and with threat for threat,
The proud one confronted the cruel:
And loud and bitter the quarrel arose,
Fierce and merciless—one of those,
With spoken daggers, and looks like blows,
In all but the bloodshed a duel!

Rash, and wild, and wretched, and wrong,
Were the words that came from weak and strong,
Till, maddened for desperate matters,
Fierce as tigress escaped from her den,
She flew to her desk—'t was opened—and then,
In the time it takes to try a pen,
Or the clerk to utter his slow Amen,
Her Will was in fifty tatters!

But the count, instead of curses wild,
Only nodded his head and smiled,
As if at the spleen of an angry child;

But the calm was deceitful and sinister!
A lull like the lull of the treacherous sea —
For Hate in that moment had sworn to be
The Golden Leg's sole Legatee,
And that very night to administer!

Her Death.

'T is a stern and startling thing to think
How often mortality stands on the brink
Of its grave without any misgiving:
And yet, in this slippery world of strife,
In the stir of human bustle so rife
There are daily sounds to tell us that Life
Is dying, and Death is living!

Ay, Beauty the girl, and Love the boy,
Bright as they are with hope and joy,
How their souls would sadden instanter,
To remember that one of those wedding bells,
Which ring so merrily through the dells.
Is the same that knells
Our last farewells,
Only broken into a canter!

But breath and blood set doom at naught —
How little the wretched countess thought,
When at night she unloosed her sandal,
That the Fates had woven her burial-cloth,
And that Death, in the shape of a death's-head moth
Was fluttering round her candle!

As she looked at her clock of or-molu,
For the hours she had gone so wearily through
At the end of a day of trial —
How little she saw in her pride of prime

The dart of death in the hand of Time—
That hand which moved on the dial!

As she went with her taper up the stair,
How little her swollen eye was aware
That the Shadow which followed was double!
Or when she closed her chamber door,
It was shutting out, and forevermore,
The world—and its worldly trouble.

Little she dreamt, as she laid aside
Her jewels—after one glance of pride—
They were solemn bequests to Vanity—
Or when her robes she began to doff,
That she stood so near to the putting off
Of the flesh that clothes humanity.

And when she quenched the taper's light,
How little she thought, as the smoke took flight
That her day was done—and merged in a night
Of dreams and duration uncertain—
Or, along with her own,
That a hand of bone
Was closing mortality's curtain!

But life is sweet, and mortality blind,
And youth is hopeful, and Fate is kind
In concealing the day of sorrow;
And enough is the present tense of toil—
For this world is, to all, a stiffish soil—
And the mind flies back with a glad recoil
From the debts not due till to-morrow.

Wherefore else does the spirit fly
And bid its daily cares good-by,
Along with its daily clothing?
Just as the felon condemned to die—

With a very natural loathing —
Leaving the sheriff to dream of ropes,
From his gloomy cell in a vision elopes,
To caper on sunny greens and slopes,
Instead of the dance upon nothing.

Thus, even thus, the countess slept,
While Death still nearer and nearer crept,
Like the Thane who smote the sleeping—
But her mind was busy with early joys,
Her golden treasures and golden toys,
That flashed a bright
And golden light
Under lids still red with weeping.

The golden doll that she used to hug!
Her coral of gold, and the golden mug!
Her godfather's golden presents!
The golden service she had at her meals,
The golden watch, and chain, and seals,
Her golden scissors, and thread, and reels,
And her golden fishes and pheasants!

The golden guineas in silken purse —
And the golden legends she heard from her nurse
Of the Mayor in his gilded carriage —
And London streets that were paved with gold —
And the golden eggs that were laid of old —
With each golden thing
To the golden ring
At her own auriferous marriage!

And still the golden light of the sun
Through her golden dream appeared to run,
Though the night that roared without was one
To terrify seamen or gypsies —

While the moon, as if in malicious mirth,
Kept peeping down at the ruffled earth,
As though she enjoyed the tempest's birth,
In revenge of her old eclipses.

But vainly, vainly the thunder fell,
For the soul of the sleeper was under a spell
That time had lately embittered —
The count, as once at her foot he knelt —
That foot which now he wanted to melt!
But — hush! —'t was a stir at her pillow she felt—
And some object before her glittered.

'T was the Golden Leg! — she knew its gleam!
And up she started, and tried to scream,—
But even in the moment she started —
Down came the limb with a frightful smash,
And, lost in the universal flash
That her eyeballs made at so mortal a crash,
The spark, called Vital, departed!

* * * *

Gold, still gold! hard, yellow, and cold,
For gold she had lived, and she died for gold —
By a golden weapon — not oaken;
In the morning they found her all alone —
Stiff, and bloody, and cold as stone —
But her Leg, the Golden Leg, was gone,
And the "golden bowl was broken!"

Gold — still gold! it haunted her yet—
At the Golden Lion the inquest met —
Its foreman, a carver and gilder —
And the jury debated from twelve till three
What the verdict ought to be.

And they brought it in as Felo-de-Se,
"Because her own leg had killed her!"

Her Moral.

Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled;
Heavy to get, and light to hold;
Hoarded, bartered, bought, and sold,
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled:
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old
To the very verge of the church-yard mould;
Price of many a crime untold:
Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Good or bad a thousand-fold!
How widely its agencies vary —
To save — to ruin — to curse — to bless —
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamped with the image of good Queen Bess,
And now of a Bloody Mary.

A MORNING THOUGHT.

No more, no more will I resign
My couch so warm and soft,
To trouble trout with hook and line,
That will not spring aloft.

With larks appointments one may fix
To greet the dawning skies,
But hang the getting up at six
For fish that will not *rise!*

A TALE OF A TRUMPET.

"Old woman, old woman, will you go a-shearing?
Speak a little louder, for I 'm very hard of hearing."

OLD BALLAD.

Of all old women hard of hearing,
The deafest, sure, was Dame Eleanor Spearing!
On her head, it is true,
Two flaps there grew,
That served for a pair of gold rings to go through;
But for any purpose of ears in a parley,
They heard no more than ears of barley.

No hint was needed from D. E. F.
You saw in her face that the woman was deaf:
From her twisted mouth to her eyes so peery,
Each queer feature asked a query;
A look that said, in a silent way,
"Who? and What? and How? and Eh?
I 'd give my ears to know what you say!"
And well she might! for each auricular
Was deaf as a post — and that post in particular
That stands at the corner of Dyott-street now,
And never hears a word of a row!

Ears that might serve her now and then
As extempore racks for an idle pen;
Or to hang with hoops from jewellers' shops
With coral, ruby, or garnet drops;

Or, provided the owner so inclined,
Ears to stick a blister behind;
But as for hearing wisdom or wit,
Falsehood, or folly, or tell-tale-tit,
Or politics, whether of Fox or Pitt,
Sermon, lecture, or musical bit,
Harp, piano, fiddle, or kit,
They might as well, for any such wish,
Have been buttered, done brown, and laid in a dish!
She was deaf as a post,— as said before,—
And as deaf as twenty similes more,
Including the adder, that deafest of snakes,
Which never hears the coil it makes.

She was deaf as a house — which modern tricks
Of language would call as deaf as bricks —
For her all human kind were dumb,
Her drum, indeed, was so muffled a drum,
That none could get a sound to come,
Unless the Devil who had Two Sticks!
She was deaf as a stone — say one of the stones
Demosthenes sucked to improve his tones;
And surely deafness no further could reach
Than to be in his mouth without hearing his speech!
She was deaf as a nut — for nuts, no doubt,
Are deaf to the grub that 's hollowing out –
As deaf, alas! as the dead and forgotten —
(Gray has noticed the waste of breath,
In addressing the "dull, cold ear of death"),
Or the Felon's ear that was stuffed with Cotton —
Or Charles the First, *in statue quo:*
Or the still-born figures of Madame Tussaud,
With their eyes of glass, and their hair of flax,
That only stare, whatever you "ax,"
For their ears, you know, are nothing but wax.

She was deaf as the ducks that swam in the pond,
And would n't listen to Mrs. Bond,—
As deaf as any Frenchman appears,
When he puts his shoulders into his ears:
And — whatever the citizen tells his son —
As deaf as Gog and Magog at one!
Or, still to be a simile-seeker,
As deaf as dog's-ears to Enfield's Speaker!

She was deaf as any tradesman's dummy,
Or as Pharaoh's mother's mother's mummy;
Whose organs, for fear of our modern sceptics,
Were plugged with gums and antiseptics.

She was deaf as a nail — that you cannot hammer
A meaning into, for all your clamor —
There never *was* such a deaf old Gammer!
So formed to worry
Both Lindley and Murray,
By having no ear for music or grammar!

Deaf to sounds, as a ship out of soundings,
Deaf to verbs, and all their compoundings,
Adjective, noun, and adverb, and particle,
Deaf to even the definite article —
No verbal message was worth a pin,
Though you hired an earwig to carry it in!

In short, she was twice as deaf as Deaf Burke,
Or all the deafness in Yearsley's Work,
Who, in spite of his skill in hardness of hearing,
Boring, blasting, and pioneering,
To give the dunny organ a clearing,
Could never have cured Dame Eleanor Spearing,

Of course the loss was a great privation,
For one of her sex — whatever her station —
And none the less that the dame had a turn

For making all families one concern,
And learning whatever there was to learn
In the prattling, tattling village of Tringham —
As who wore silk? and who wore gingham?
And what the Atkins's shop might bring 'em?
How the Smiths contrived to live? and whether
The fourteen Murphys all pigged together?
The wages per week of the Weavers and Skinners,
And what they boiled for their Sunday dinners?
What plates the Bugsbys had on the shelf,
Crockery, china, wooden, or delf?
And if the parlor of Mrs. O'Grady
Had a wicked French print, or Death and the Lady?
Did Snip and his wife continue to jangle?
Had Mrs. Wilkinson sold her mangle?
What liquor was drunk by Jones and Brown?
And the weekly score they ran up at the Crown?
If the cobbler could read, and believed in the Pope?
And how the Grubbs were off for soap?
If the Snobbs had furnished their room up stairs.
And how they managed for tables and chairs,
Beds, and other household affairs,
Iron, wooden, and Staffordshire wares;
And if they could muster a whole pair of bellows!
In fact she had much of the spirit that lies
Perdu in a notable set of Paul Prys,
By courtesy called Statistical Fellows —
A prying, spying, inquisitive clan,
Who had gone upon much of the self-same plan,
Jotting the laboring class's riches;
And after poking in pot and pan,
And routing garments in want of stitches,
Have ascertained that a working man
Wears a pair and a quarter of average breeches!

But this, alas! from her loss of hearing,
Was all a sealed book to Dame Eleanor Spearing;
And often her tears would rise to their founts —
Supposing a little scandal at play
'Twixt Mrs. O'Fie and Mrs. Au Fait —
That she could n't audit the gossips' accounts.
'T is true, to her cottage still they came,
And ate her muffins just the same,
And drank the tea of the widowed dame,
And never swallowed a thimble the less
Of something the reader is left to guess,
For all the deafness of Mrs. S.,
Who *saw* them talk, and chuckle, and cough,
But to *see* and not share in the social flow,
She might as well have lived, you know,
In one of the houses in Owen's Row,
Near the New River Head, with its water cut off!

And yet the almond-oil she had tried,
And fifty infallible things beside,
Hot, and cold, and thick, and thin,
Dabbed, and dribbled, and squirted in:
But all remedies failed; and though some it was clear
(Like the brandy and salt
We now exalt)
Had made a noise in the public ear,
She was just as deaf as ever, poor dear.

At last — one very fine day in June —
Suppose her sitting,
Busily knitting,
And humming she did n't quite know what tune;
For nothing she heard but a sort of a whizz,
Which, unless the sound of a circulation,
Or of thoughts in the process of fabrication,

By a spinning-jennyish operation,
It 's hard to say what buzzing it is.
However, except that ghost of a sound,
She sat in a silence most profound —
The cat was purring about the mat,
But her mistress heard no more of that
Than if it had been a boatswain's cat;
And as for the clock the moments nicking,
The dame only gave it credit for ticking.
The bark of her dog she did not catch;
Nor yet the click of the lifted latch;
Nor yet the creak of the opening door;
Nor yet the fall of the foot on the floor —
But she saw the shadow that crept on her gown,
And turned its skirt of a darker brown.

And, lo! a man! a pedler? ay, marry,
With a little back-shop that such tradesmen carry,
Stocked with brooches, ribbons, and rings,
Spectacles, razors, and other odd things,
For lad and lass, as Autolycus sings;
A chapman for goodness and cheapness of ware
Held a fair dealer enough at a fair,
But deemed a piratical sort of invader
By him we dub the "regular trader,"
Who, luring the passengers in as they pass
By lamps, gay panels, and mouldings of brass,
And windows with only one huge pane of glass,
And his name in gilt characters, German or Roman
If he is n't a pedler, at least is a showman!

However, in the stranger came,
And, the moment he met the eyes of the dame,
Threw her as knowing a nod as though
He had known her fifty long years ago;

And, presto! before she could utter "Jack"—
Much less "Robinson" — opened his pack —
  And then from amongst his portable gear,
With even more than a pedler's tact,—
(Slick himself might have envied the act)—
Before she had time to be deaf, in fact,
  Popped a trumpet into her ear.

"There, ma'am! try it!
  You need n't buy it —
The last new patent — and nothing comes nigh it
For affording the deaf, at little expense,
The sense of hearing, and hearing of sense!
A real blessing — and no mistake,
Invented for poor humanity's sake;
For what can be a greater privation
Than playing dummy to all creation,
And only looking at conversation —
Great philosophers talking like Platos,
And members of Parliament moral as Catos,
And your ears as dull as waxy potatoes!
Not to name the mischievous quizzers,
Sharp as knives, but double as scissors,
Who get you to answer quite by guess
Yes for no, and no for yes."
("That 's very true," says Dame Eleanor S.)

"Try it again! No harm in trying —
I 'm sure you 'll find it worth your buying.
A little practice — that is all —
And you 'll hear a whisper, however small,
Through an Act of Parliament party wall,—
Every syllable clear as day,
And even what people are going to say —

I would n't tell a lie, I would n't,
But my trumpets have heard what Solomon's could n't;
And as for Scott, he promises fine,
But can he warrant his horns, like mine,
Never to hear what a lady should n't? —
Only a guinea — and can't take less."
("That 's very dear," says Dame Eleanor S.)

"Dear! — O dear, to call it dear!
Why it is n't a horn you buy, but an ear;
Only think, and you 'll find on reflection
You 're bargaining, ma'am, for the Voice of Affection
For the language of Wisdom, and Virtue, and Truth,
And the sweet little innocent prattle of youth:
Not to mention the striking of clocks —
Cackle of hens — crowing of cocks —
Lowing of cow, and bull, and ox —
Bleating of pretty pastoral flocks —
Murmur of waterfall over the rocks —
Every sound that Echo mocks —
Vocals, fiddles, and musical-box —
And, zounds! to call such a concert dear!
But I must n't swear with my horn in your ear.
Why, in buying that trumpet you buy all those
That Harper, or any trumpeter, blows
At the Queen's levees, or the Lord Mayor's shows.
At least as far as the music goes,
Including the wonderful lively sound
Of the Guards' key-bugles all the year round.
Come — suppose we call it a pound!
Come," said the talkative man of the pack,
"Before I put my box on my back,
For this elegant, useful conductor of sound,
Come — suppose we call it a pound!

"Only a pound! it 's only the price
Of hearing a concert once or twice,
It 's only the fee
You might give Mr. C.,
And after all not hear his advice,
But common prudence would bid you stump it;
For, not to enlarge,
It 's the regular charge
At a fancy fair for a penny trumpet.
Lord! what 's a pound to the blessing of hearing!"
("A pound 's a pound," said Dame Eleanor Spearing.)

"Try it again! no harm in trying!
A pound 's a pound, there 's no denying;
But think what thousands and thousands of pounds
We pay for nothing but hearing sounds;
Sounds of equity, justice, and law,
Parliamentary jabber and jaw,
Pious cant and moral saw,
Hocus-pocus, and Nong-tong-paw,
And empty sounds not worth a straw;
Why, it costs a guinea, as I 'm a sinner,
To hear the sounds at a public dinner!
One-pound-one thrown into the puddle,
To listen to fiddle, faddle and fuddle!
Not to forget the sounds we buy
From those who sell their sounds so high,
That, unless the managers pitch it strong,
To get a signora to warble a song
You must fork out the blunt with a haymaker's prong.

"It 's not the thing for me — I know it—
To crack my own trumpet up and blow it;
But it is the best, and time will show it.

There was Mrs. F.
So very deaf,
That she might have worn a percussion-cap,
And been knocked on the head without hearing it snap.
Well, I sold her a horn, and the very next day
She heard from her husband at Botany Bay!
Come — eighteen shillings — that 's very low,
You 'll save the money as shillings go,—
And I never knew so bad a lot,—
By hearing whether they ring or not!
Eighteen shillings! it 's worth the price,
Supposing you 're delicate-minded and nice,
To have the medical man of your choice,
Instead of the one with the strongest voice —
Who comes and asks you how 's your liver,
And where you ache, and whether you shiver,
And as to your nerves so apt to quiver,
As if he was hailing a boat on the river!
And then, with a shout, like Pat in a riot,
Tells you to keep yourself perfectly quiet!

"Or a tradesman comes — as tradesmen will —
Short and crusty about his bill,
Of patience, indeed, a perfect scorner,
And because you 're deaf and unable to pay,
Shouts whatever he has to say,
In a vulgar voice that goes over the way,
Down the street and round the corner!
Come — speak your mind — it 's 'No or Yes.'"
("I 've half a mind," said Dame Eleanor S.)

"Try it again — no harm in trying;
Of course you hear me, as easy as lying;
No pain at all, like a surgical trick,
To make you squall, and struggle, and kick,

Like Juno, or Rose,
Whose ear undergoes
Such horrid tugs at membrane and gristle,
For being as deaf as yourself to a whistle!

"You may go to surgical chaps, if you choose,
Who will blow up your tubes like copper flues,
Or cut your tonsils right away,
As you'd shell out your almonds for Christmas-day;
And after all a matter of doubt,
Whether you ever would hear the shout
Of the little blackguards that bawl about,
'There you go with your tonsils out!'
Why, I knew a deaf Welshman who came from Glamorgan
On purpose to try a surgical spell,
And paid a guinea, and might as well
Have called a monkey into his organ!
For the Aurist only took a mug,
And poured in his ear some acoustical drug,
That, instead of curing, deafened him rather,
As Hamlet's uncle served Hamlet's father!
That's the way with your surgical gentry!
And happy your luck
If you don't get stuck
Through your liver and lights at a royal entry,
Because you never answered the sentry!

"Try it again, dear madam, try it!
Many would sell their beds to buy it.
I warrant you often wake up in the night,
Ready to shake to a jelly with fright,
And up you must get to strike a light,
And down you go in you know not what,
Whether the weather is chilly or not,—

That 's the way a cold is got,—
To see if you heard a noise or not!

"Why, bless you, a woman with organs like yours
Is hardly safe to step out of doors!
Just fancy a horse that comes full pelt,
But as quiet as if he was 'shod with felt,'
Till he rushes against you with all his force,
And then I need n't describe, of course,
While he kicks you about without remorse,
How awkward it is to be groomed by a horse!
Or a bullock comes, as mad as King Lear,
And you never dream that the brute is near,
Till he pokes his horn right into your ear,
Whether you like the thing or lump it,—
And all for want of buying a trumpet!

"I 'm not a female to fret and vex,
But if I belonged to the sensitive sex,
Exposed to all sorts of indelicate sounds,
I would n't be deaf for a thousand pounds.
Lord! only think of chucking a copper
To Jack or Bob with a timber limb,
Who looks as if he was singing a hymn,
Instead of a song that 's very improper!
Or just suppose in a public place
You see a great fellow a-pulling a face,
With his staring eyes and his mouth like an O,—
And how is a poor deaf lady to know —
The lower orders are up to such games —
If he 's calling 'Green Peas,' or calling her names?"
("They 're tenpence a peck!" said the deafest of dames.)

"'T is strange what very strong advising,
By word of mouth or advertising,

By chalking on walls, or placarding on vans,
With fifty other different plans,
The very high pressure, in fact, of pressing,
It needs to persuade one to purchase a blessing!
Whether the Soothing American Syrup,
A Safety Hat or a Safety Stirrup,—
Infallible Pills for the human frame,
Or Rowland's O-don't-o (an ominous name!)
A Doudney's suit which the shape so hits
That it beats all others into *fits*;
A Mechi's razor for beards unshorn,
Or a Ghost-of-a-Whisper-Catching Horn!

"Try it again, ma'am, only try!"
Was still the voluble pedler's cry;
"It 's a great privation, there 's no dispute,
To live like the dumb unsociable brute,
And to hear no more of the *pro* and *con*,
And how society's going on,
Than Mumbo Jumbo or Prester John,
And all for want of this *sine quâ non*;
Whereas, with a horn that never offends,
You may join the genteelest party that is,
And enjoy all the scandal, and gossip, and quiz,
And be certain to hear of your absent friends;—
Not that elegant ladies, in fact,
In genteel society ever detract,
Or lend a brush when a friend is blacked,
At least as a mere malicious act,—
But only talk scandal for fear some fool
Should think they were bred at *charity* school.
Or, maybe, you like a little flirtation,
Which even the most Don Juanish rake
Would surely object to undertake
At the same high pitch as an altercation.

It 's not for me, of course, to judge
How much a deaf lady ought to begrudge;
But half-a-guinea seems no great matter —
Letting alone more rational patter —
Only to hear a parrot chatter;
Not to mention that feathered wit,
The starling, who speaks when his tongue is slit;
The pies and jays that utter words,
And other Dicky Gossips of birds,
That talk with as much good sense and decorum
As many *Beaks* who belong to the quorum.

"Try it — buy it — say ten-and-six,
The lowest price a miser could fix:
I don't pretend with horns of mine,
Like some in the advertising line,
To '*magnify sounds*' on such marvellous scales
That the sounds of a cod seem as big as a whale's;
But popular rumors, right or wrong,—
Charity sermons, short or long,—
Lecture, speech, concerto, or song,
All noises and voices, feeble or strong,
From the hum of a gnat to the clash of a gong,
This tube will deliver, distinct and clear:
Or supposing by chance
You wish to dance,
Why, it 's putting a *Horn-pipe* into your ear!
Try it — buy it!
Buy it — try it!
The last new patent, and nothing comes nigh it,
For guiding sounds to proper tunnel:
Only try till the end of June,
And if you and the trumpet are out of tune,
I 'll turn it gratis into a funnel!"

In short, the pedler so beset her,—
Lord Bacon could n't have gammoned her better,—
With flatteries plump and indirect,
And plied his tongue with such effect,—
A tongue that could almost have buttered a crumpet,—
The deaf old woman bought the trumpet.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

The pedler was gone. With the horn's assistance,
She heard his steps die away in the distance;
And then she heard the tick of the clock,
The purring of puss, and the snoring of Shock!
And she purposely dropt a pin that was little,
And heard it fall as plain as a skittle!

'T was a wonderful horn, to be but just!
Nor meant to gather dust, must, and rust:
So in half a jiffy, or less than that,
In her scarlet cloak and her steeple hat,
Like old Dame Trot, but without her Cat,
The gossip was hunting all Tringham thorough,
As if she meant to canvass the borough,
Trumpet in hand, or up to the cavity:—
And, sure, had the horn been one of those
The wild rhinoceros wears on his nose
It could n't have ripped up more depravity!

Depravity! mercy shield her ears!
'T was plain enough that her village peers
In the ways of vice were no raw beginners;
For whenever she raised the tube to her drum,
Such sounds were transmitted as only come
From the very brass band of human sinners!

Ribald jest and blasphemous curse,
(Bunyan never vented worse,)

With all those weeds, not flowers, of speech
Which the seven Dialecticians teach;
Filthy conjunctions, and dissolute nouns,
And particles picked from the kennels of towns,
With irregular verbs for irregular jobs,
Chiefly active in rows and mobs,
Picking possessive pronouns' fobs,
And interjections as bad as a blight,
Or an Eastern blast, to the blood and the sight;
Fanciful phrases for crime and sin,
And smacking of vulgar lips where gin,
Garlic, tobacco, and offals go in —
A jargon so truly adapted, in fact,
To each thievish, obscene, and ferocious act,
So fit for the brute with the human shape,
Savage baboon, or libidinous ape,
From their ugly mouths it will certainly come
Should they ever get weary of shamming dumb!

Alas! for the voice of Virtue and Truth,
And the sweet little innocent prattle of youth!
The smallest urchin whose tongue could tang
Shocked the dame with a volley of slang,
Fit for Fagin's juvenile gang;
While the charity chap,
With his muffin cap,
His crimson coat and his badge so garish,
Playing at dumps, or pitch in the hole,
Cursed his eyes, limbs, body, and soul,
As if they did n't belong to the parish!
'T was awful to hear, as she went along,
The wicked words of the popular song:
Or supposing she listened — as gossips will —
At a door ajar, or a window agape,
To catch the sounds they allowed to escape.

Those sounds belonged to Depravity still!
The dark allusion, or bolder brag
Of the dexterous "dodge," and the lots of "swag,"
The plundered house — or the stolen nag —
The blazing rick, or the darker crime
That quenched the spark before its time —
The wanton speech of the wife immoral —
The noise of drunken or deadly quarrel,—
With savage menaces, which threatened the life,
Till the heart seemed merely a strop "for the knife;"
The human liver, no better than that
Which is sliced and thrown to an old woman's cat;
And the head, so useful for shaking and nodding,
To be punched into holes, like a "shocking bad hat"
That is only fit to be punched into wadding!

In short, wherever she turned the horn,
To the highly bred or the lowly born,
The working man who looked over the hedge,
Or the mother nursing her infant pledge,
The sober Quaker, averse to quarrels,
Or the governess pacing the village through,
With her twelve young ladies, two and two,
Looking, as such young ladies do,
Trussed by Decorum and stuffed with morals —
Whether she listened to Hob or Bob,
Nob or Snob,
The Squire on his cob,
Or Trudge and his ass at a tinkering job,
To the saint who expounded at "Little Zion"—
Or the "sinner who kept the Golden Lion"—
The man teetotally weaned from liquor —
The beadle, the clerk, or the reverend vicar —
Nay, the very pie in its cage of wicker —
She gathered such meanings, double or single,

That, like the bell
With muffins to sell,
Her ear was kept in a constant tingle!

But this was naught to the tales of shame.
The constant runnings of evil fame,
Foul, and dirty, and black as ink,
That her ancient cronies, with nod and wink.
Poured in her horn like slops in a sink:
While sitting in conclave, as gossips do,
With their Hyson or Howqua, black or green,
And not a little of feline spleen
Lapped up in "Catty packages," too,
To give a zest to the sipping and supping;
For still, by some invisible tether,
Scandal and tea are linked together,
As surely as scarification and cupping;
Yet never since Scandal drank Bohea —
Or sloe, or whatever it happened to be,
For some grocerly thieves
Turn over new leaves
Without much amending their lives or their tea —
No, never since cup was filled or stirred,
Were such vile and horrible anecdotes heard,
As blackened their neighbors of either gender,
Especially that which is called the Tender,
But instead of the softness we fancy therewith,
As hardened in vice as the vice of a smith.

Women! the wretches! had soiled and marred
Whatever to womanly nature belongs;
For the marriage tie they had no regard,
Nay, sped their mates to the sexton's yard,
(Like Madame Laffarge, who with poisonous pinches
Kept cutting off her L by inches)
And as for drinking, they drank so hard

That they drank their flat-irons, pokers, and tongs
The men — they fought and gambled at fairs;
And poached — and did n't respect gray hairs —
Stole linen, money, plate, poultry, and corses;
And broke in houses as well as horses;
Unfolded folds to kill their own mutton,
And would their own mothers and wives for a button —
But not to repeat the deeds they did,
Backsliding in spite of all moral skid,
If all were true that fell from the tongue,
There was not a villager, old or young,
But deserved to be whipped, imprisoned, or hung,
Or sent on those travels which nobody hurries
To publish at Colburn's, or Longmans', or Murray's.

Meanwhile the trumpet, *con amore*,
Transmitted each vile diabolical story;
And gave the least whisper of slips and falls,
As that gallery does in the dome of St. Paul's,
Which, as all the world knows, by practice or print,
Is famous for making the most of a hint.
Not a murmur of shame,
Or buzz of blame,
Not a flying report that flew at a name,
Not a plausible gloss, or significant note,
Not a word in the scandalous circles afloat
Of a beam in the eye or diminutive mote,
But vortex-like that tube of tin
Sucked the censorious particle in;
And, truth to tell, for as willing an organ
As ever listened to serpent's hiss,
Nor took the viperous sound amiss,
On the snaky head of an ancient Gorgon!

The dame, it is true, would mutter "Shocking!"
And give her head a sorrowful rocking,
And make a clucking with palate and tongue,
Like the call of Partlett to gather her young, —
A sound, when human, that always proclaims
At least a thousand pities and shames.
But still the darker the tale of sin,
Like certain folks when calamities burst,
Who find a comfort in "hearing the worst,"
The further she poked the trumpet in.
Nay, worse, whatever she heard, she spread
East, and West, and North, and South,
Like the ball which, according to Captain Z.,
Went in at his ear, and came out at his mouth.

What wonder, between the horn and the dame,
Such mischief was made wherever they came,
That the parish of Tringham was all in a flame!
For although it requires such loud discharges,
Such peals of thunder as rumbled at Lear,
To turn the smallest of table-beer,
A little whisper breathed into the ear
Will sour a temper "as sour as varges."
In fact, such very ill blood there grew,
From this private circulation of stories,
That the nearest neighbors, the village through,
Looked at each other as yellow and blue
As any electioneering crew
Wearing the colors of Whigs and Tories.

Ah! well the poet said, in sooth,
That "whispering tongues can poison Truth,"
Yea, like a dose of oxalic acid,
Wrench and convulse poor Peace, the placid,

And rack dear Love with internal fuel,
Like arsenic pastry, or, what is as cruel,
Sugar of lead, that sweetens gruel;
At least such torments began to wring 'em
From the very morn
When that mischievous horn
Caught the whisper of tongues in Tringham.

The Social Clubs dissolved in huffs,
And the Sons of Harmony came to cuffs,
While feuds arose, and family quarrels,
That discomposed the mechanics of morals,
For screws were loose between brother and brother,
While sisters fastened their nails on each other:
Such wrangles, and jangles, and miff, and tiff,
And spar, and jar — and breezes as stiff
As ever upset a friendship or skiff!
The plighted lovers, who used to walk,
Refused to meet, and declined to talk;
And wished for *two* moons to reflect the sun,
That they might n't look together on one;
While wedded affection ran so low,
That the oldest John Anderson snubbed his Jo —
And instead of the toddle adown the hill,
Hand in hand,
As the song has planned,
Scratched her, penniless, out of his will!

In short, to describe what came to pass
In a true, though somewhat theatrical way,
Instead of "Love in a Village" — alas!
The piece they performed was "The Devil to Pay!"

However, as secrets are brought to light,
And mischief comes home like chickens at night;

And rivers are tracked throughout their course,
And forgeries traced to their proper source; —
And the sow that ought
By the ear is caught,—
And the sin to the sinful door is brought;
And the cat at last escapes from the bag —
And the saddle is placed on the proper nag;
And the fog blows off, and the key is found —
And the faulty scent is picked out by the hound —
And the fact turns up like a worm from the ground —
And the matter gets wind to waft it about;
And a hint goes abroad, and the murder is out —
And the riddle is guessed — and the puzzle is known —
So the truth was sniffed, and the trumpet was *blown!*

* * * * *

'T is a day in November — a day of fog —
But the Tringham people are all agog;
Fathers, mothers, and mothers' sons,—
With sticks, and staves, and swords, and guns,—
As if in pursuit of a rabid dog;
But their voices — raised to the highest pitch —
Declare that the game is "a Witch! — a Witch!"
Over the green and along by the George —
Past the stocks, and the church, and the forge,
And round the pound, and skirting the pond,
Till they come to the whitewashed cottage beyond,
And there at the door they muster and cluster,
And thump, and kick, and bellow, and bluster —
Enough to put old Nick in a fluster!
A noise, indeed, so loud and long,
And mixed with expressions so very strong,
That supposing, according to popular fame,
"Wise Woman" and Witch to be the same,

No hag with a broom would unwisely stop,
But up and away through the chimney-top;
Whereas, the moment they burst the door,
Planted fast on her sanded floor,
With her trumpet up to her organ of hearing,
Lo and behold! — Dame Eleanor Spearing!

O! then arises the fearful shout —
Bawled and screamed, and bandied about —
"Seize her! — drag the old Jezebel out!"
While the beadle — the foremost of all the band —
Snatches the horn from her trembling hand.
And after a pause of doubt and fear,
Puts it up to his sharpest ear.

"Now silence — silence — one and all!"
For the clerk is quoting from Holy Paul!
But before he rehearses
A couple of verses,
The beadle lets the trumpet fall;
For instead of the words so pious and humble,
He hears a supernatural grumble.

Enough, enough! and more than enough; —
Twenty impatient hands and rough,
By arm, and leg, and neck, and scruff,
Apron, 'kerchief, gown of stuff —
Cap, and pinner, sleeve, and cuff —
Are clutching the Witch wherever they can,
With the spite of woman and fury of man;
And then — but first they kill her cat,
And murder her dog on the very mat —
And crush the infernal trumpet flat; —
And then they hurry her through the door
She never, never. will enter more!

Away! away! down the dusty lane
They pull her, and haul her, with might and main:
And happy the hawbuck, Tom or Harry,
Dandy, or Sandy, Jerry, or Larry,.
Who happens to get "a leg to carry!"
And happy the foot that can give her a kick,
And happy the hand that can find a brick –
And happy the fingers that hold a stick —
Knife to cut, or pin to prick —
And happy the boy who can lend her a lick; —
Nay, happy the urchin — charity-bred —
Who can shy very nigh to her wicked old head!

Alas! to think how people's creeds
Are contradicted by people's deeds!
But though the wishes that Witches utter
Can play the most diabolical rigs —
Send styes in the eye — and measle the pigs —
Grease horses' heels — and spoil the butter;
Smut and mildew the corn on the stalk —
And turn new milk to water and chalk,—
Blight apples — and give the chickens the pip —
And cramp the stomach — and cripple the hip —
And waste the body — and addle the eggs —
And give a baby bandy legs;
Though in common belief a Witch's curse
Involves all these horrible things and worse —
As ignorant bumpkins all profess —
No bumpkin makes a poke the less
At the back or ribs of old Eleanor S.!
As if she were only a sack of barley;
Or gives her credit for greater might
Than the powers of darkness confer at night
On that other old woman, the parish Charley;

Ay, now 's the time for a Witch to call
On her imps and sucklings one and all —
Newes, Pyewacket, or Peck in the Crown,
(As Matthew Hopkins has handed them down)
Dick, and Willet, and Sugar-and-Sack,
Greedy Grizel, Jarmara the Black,
Vinegar Tom and the rest of the pack —
Ay, now 's the nick for her friend Old Harry
To come "with his tail" like the bold Glengarry,
And drive her foes from their savage job
As a mad Black Bullock would scatter a mob: —
But no such matter is down in the bond;
And spite of her cries that never cease,
But scare the ducks and astonish the geese,
The dame is dragged to the fatal pond!

And now they come to the water's brim —
And in they bundle her — sink or swim;
Though it's twenty to one that the wretch must drown,
With twenty sticks to hold her down;
Including the help to the self-same end,
Which a travelling pedler stops to lend.
A pedler! — Yes! — The same! — the same!
Who sold the horn to the drowning dame!
And now is foremost amid the stir,
With a token only revealed to her;
A token that makes her shudder and shriek,
And point with her finger, and strive to speak —
But before she can utter the name of the Devil,
Her head is under the water level!

Moral.

There are folks about town — to name no names —
Who much resemble that deafest of dames;

And over their tea, and muffins, and crumpets,
Circulate many a scandalous word,
And whisper tales they could only have heard
Through some such Diabolical Trumpets!

NO!

No sun — no moon!
No morn — no noon —
No dawn — no dusk — no proper time of day —
No sky — no earthly view —
No distance looking blue —
No road — no street — no "t'other side the way" —
No end to any Row —
No indications where the Crescents go —
No top to any steeple —
No recognitions of familiar people —
No courtesies for showing 'em —
No knowing 'em!
No travelling at all — no locomotion,
No inkling of the way — no notion —
"No go" — by land or ocean —
No mail — no post —
No news from any foreign coast —
No park — no ring — no afternoon gentility —
No company — no nobility —
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member —
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds,
November!

THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER.

ALACK! 't is melancholy theme to think
How Learning doth in rugged states abide,
And, like her bashful owl, obscurely blink,
In pensive glooms and corners, scarcely spied;
Not, as in Founders' Halls and domes of pride,
Served with grave homage, like a tragic queen,
But with one lonely priest compelled to hide,
In midst of foggy moors and mosses green,
In that clay cabin hight the College of Kilreen!

This college looketh South and West alsoe,
Because it hath a cast in windows twain;
Crazy and cracked they be, and wind doth blow
Thorough transparent holes in every pane,
Which Dan, with many paines, makes whole again
With nether garments, which his thrift doth teach
To stand for glass, like pronouns, and when rain
Stormeth, he puts, "once more unto the breach,"
Outside and in, though broke, yet so he mendeth each.

And in the midst a little door there is,
Whereon a board that doth congratulate
With painted letters, red as blood I wis,
Thus written, "Children taken in to Mate;"
And oft, indeed, the inward of that gate,
Most ventriloque, doth utter tender squeak,
And moans of infants that bemoan their fate,
In midst of sounds of Latin, French, and Greek,
Which, all i' the Irish tongue, he teacheth them to speak.

For some are meant to right illegal wrongs,
And some for Doctors of Divinitie,
Whom he doth teach to murder the dead tongues
And soe win academical degree;
But some are bred for service of the sea,
Howbeit, their store of learning is but small,
For mickle waste he counteth it would be
To stock a head with bookish wares at all,
Only to be knocked off by ruthless cannon-ball.

Six babes he sways,— some little and some big
Divided into classes six; — alsoe,
He keeps a parlor boarder of a pig,
That in the college fareth to and fro,
And picketh up the urchins' crumbs below,—
And eke the learned rudiments they scan,
And thus his A, B, C, doth wisely know,—
Hereafter to be shown in caravan,
And raise the wonderment of many a learned man.

Alsoe, he schools some tame familiar fowls,
Whereof, above his head, some two or three
Sit darkly squatting, like Minerva's owls,
But on the branches of no living tree,
And overlook the learned family;
While, sometimes, Partlet, from her gloomy perch,
Drops feather on the nose of Dominie,
Meanwhile, with serious eye, he makes research
In leaves of that sour tree of knowledge — now a birch.

No chair he hath, the awful pedagogue,
Such as would magisterial hams imbed,
But sitteth lowly on a beechen log,
Secure in high authority and dread:
Large, as a dome for learning, seems his head
And like Apollo's, all beset with rays,

Because his locks are so unkempt and red,
And stand abroad in many several ways: —
No laurel crown he wears, howbeit his cap is baize,

And, underneath, a pair of shaggy brows
O'erhang as many eyes of gizzard hue,
That inward giblet of a fowl, which shows
A mongrel tint, that is ne brow ne blue;
His nose,— it is a coral to the view;
Well nourished with Pierian potheen,—
For much he loves his native mountain dew; —
But to depict the dye would lack, I ween,
A bottle-red, in terms, as well as bottle-green.

As for his coat, 't is such a jerkin short
As Spenser had, ere he composed his Tales;
But underneath he hath no vest, nor aught,
So that the wind his airy breast assails;
Below, he wears the nether garb of males,
Of crimson plush, but non-plushed at the knee: —
Thence further down the native red prevails,
Of his own naked fleecy hosierie: —
Two sandals, without soles, complete his cap-a-pie.

Nathless, for dignity, he now doth lap
His function in a magisterial gown,
That shows more countries in it than a map,—
Blue tinct, and red, and green, and russet brown,
Besides some blots, standing for country-town;
And eke some rents, for streams and rivers wide;
But, sometimes, bashful when he looks adown,
He turns the garment of the other side,
Hopeful that so the holes may never be espied!

And soe he sits, amidst the little pack,
That look for shady or for sunny noon.

Within his visage, like an almanack,—
His quiet smile foretelling gracious boon:
But when his mouth droops down, like rainy moon,
With horrid chill each little heart unwarms,
Knowing that infant showers will follow soon,
And with forebodings of near wrath and storms
They sit, like timid hares, all trembling on their forms.

Ah! luckless wight, who cannot then repeat
"Corduroy Colloquy,"— or "Ki, Kæ, Kod,"—
Full soon his tears shall make his turfy seat
More sodden, though already made of sod,
For Dan shall whip him with the word of God,—
Severe by rule, and not by nature mild,
He never spoils the child and spares the rod,
But spoils the rod and never spares the child,
And soe with holy rule deems he is reconciled.

But surely the just sky will never wink
At men who take delight in childish throe,
And stripe the nether-urchin like a pink
Or tender hyacinth, inscribed with woe;
Such bloody pedagogues, when they shall know,
By useless birches, that forlorn recess,
Which is no holiday, in Pit below,
Will hell not seem designed for their distress,—
A melancholy place, that is all bottomlesse?

Yet would the Muse not chide the wholesome use
Of needful discipline, in due degree.
Devoid of sway, what wrongs will time produce!
Whene'er the twig untrained grows up a tree,
This shall a Carder, that a Whiteboy be,
Ferocious leaders of atrocious bands,
And Learning's help be used for infamie,

By lawless clerks, that, with their bloody hands,
In murdered English write Rock's murderous commands.

But, ah! what shrilly cry doth now alarm
The sooty fowls that dozed upon the beam,
All sudden fluttering from the brandished arm
And cackling chorus with the human scream;
Meanwhile the scourge plies that unkindly seam
In Phelim's brogues, which bares his naked skin,
Like traitor gap in warlike fort, I deem,
That falsely lets the fierce besieger in,
Nor seeks the pedagogue by other course to win.

No parent dear he hath to heed his cries; —
Alas! his parent dear is far aloof,
And deep in Seven-Dial cellar lies,
Killed by kind cudgel-play, or gin of proof,
Or climbeth, catwise, on some London roof,
Singing, perchance, a lay of Erin's Isle,
Or, whilst he labors, weaves a fancy-woof,
Dreaming he sees his home,— his Phelim smile
Ah, me! that luckless imp, who weepeth all the while!

Ah! who can paint that hard and heavy time,
When first the scholar lists in Learning's train,
And mounts her rugged steep enforced to climb,
Like sooty imp, by sharp posterior pain,
From bloody twig, and eke that Indian cane,
Wherein, alas! no sugared juices dwell?
For this, the while one stripling's sluices drain,
Another weepeth over chillblains fell,
Always upon the heel, yet never to be well!

Anon a third, for his delicious root,
Late ravished from his tooth by elder chit,

So soon is human violence afoot,
So hardly is the harmless biter bit!
Meanwhile, the tyrant, with untimely wit
And mouthing face, derides the small one's moan,
Who, all lamenting for his loss, doth sit,
Alack,—mischance comes seldomtimes alone,
But aye the worried dog must rue more curs than one.

For, lo! the pedagogue, with sudden drub,
Smites his scald head, that is already sore,—
Superfluous wound,—such is Misfortune's rub!
Who straight makes answer with redoubled roar,
And sheds salt tears twice faster than before,
That still with backward fist he strives to dry;
Washing with brackish moisture, o'er and o'er,
His muddy cheek, that grows more foul thereby,
Till all his rainy face looks grim as rainy sky.

So Dan, by dint of noise, obtains a peace,
And with his natural untender knack,
By new distress, bids former grievance cease,
Like tears dried up with rugged huckaback,
That sets the mournful visage all awrack;
Yet soon the childish countenance will shine
Even as thorough storms the soonest slack,
For grief and beef in adverse ways incline,
This keeps, and that decays, when duly soaked in brine.

Now, all is hushed, and, with a look profound,
The Dominie lays ope the learned page;
(So be it called) although he doth expound
Without a book, both Greek and Latin sage;
Now telleth he of Rome's rude infant age,
How Romulus was bred in savage wood,
By wet-nurse wolf, devoid of wolfish rage,

And laid foundation-stone of walls of mud,
But watered it, alas! with warm fraternal blood.

Anon, he turns to that Homeric war,
How Troy was sieged like Londonderry town;
And stout Achilles, at his jaunting-car,
Dragged mighty Hector with a bloody crown:
And eke the bard, that sung of their renown,
In garb of Greece most beggar-like and torn,
He paints, with colly, wandering up and down:
Because, at once, in seven cities born;
And so, of parish rights, was, all his days, forlorn.

Anon, through old Mythology he goes,
Of gods defunct, and all their pedigrees,
But shuns their scandalous amours, and shows
How Plato wise, and clear-eyed Socrates,
Confessed not to those heathen he's and she's;
But through the clouds of the Olympic cope
Beheld St. Peter with his holy keys,
And owned their love was naught, and bowed to Pope,
Whilst all their purblind race in Pagan mist did grope.

From such quaint themes he turns, at last, aside,
To new philosophies, that still are green,
And shows what railroads have been tracked to guide
The wheels of great political machine;
If English corn should grow abroad, I ween,
And gold be made of gold, or paper sheet;
How many pigs be born to each spalpeen;
And, ah! how man shall thrive beyond his meat,—
With twenty souls alive to one square sod of peat!

Here he makes end; and all the fry of youth,
That stood around with serious look intense,

Close up again their gaping eyes and mouth,
Which they had opened to his eloquence,
As if their hearing were a three-fold sense.
But now the current of his words is done,
And whether any fruits shall spring from thence,
In future time, with any mother's son!
It is a thing, God wot! that can be told by none.

Now by the creeping shadows of the noon,
The hour is come to lay aside their lore;
The cheerful pedagogue perceives it soon,
And cries "Begone!" unto the imps,—and four
Snatch their two hats and struggle for the door,
Like ardent spirits vented from a cask,
All blithe and boisterous,—but leave two more,
With Reading made Uneasy for a task,
To weep, whilst all their mates in merry sunshine bask.

Like sportive Elfins, on the verdant sod,
With tender moss so sleekly overgrown,
That doth not hurt, but kiss, the sole unshod,
So soothly kind is Erin to her own!
And one, at Hare and Hound, plays all alone,—
For Phelim 's gone to tend his step-dame's cow;
Ah! Phelim's step-dame is a cankered crone!
Whilst other twain play at an Irish row,
And, with shillelah small, break one another's brow;

But careful Dominie, with ceaseless thrift,
Now changeth ferula for rural hoe;
But, first of all, with tender hand doth shift
His college gown, because of solar glow,
And hangs it on a bush, to scare the crow:
Meanwhile, he plants in earth the dappled bean.
Or trains the young potatoes all a-row,

Or plucks the fragrant leek for pottage green,
With that crisp curly herb, called Kale in Aberdeen.

And so he wisely spends the fruitful hours,
Linked each to each by labor, like a bee,
Or rules in Learning's hall, or trims her bowers; —
Would there were many more such wights as he,
To sway each capital academie
Of Cam and Isis; for, alack! at each
There dwells I wot some dronish Dominie,
That does no garden work, nor yet doth teach,
But wears a floury head, and talks in flowery speech!

EPIGRAMS

ON THE ART-UNIONS.

THAT picture-raffles will conduce to nourish
Design, or cause good Coloring to flourish,
Admits of logic-chopping and wise sawing,
But surely Lotteries encourage Drawing!

THE SUPERIORITY OF MACHINERY.

A MECHANIC his labor will often discard
If the rate of his pay he dislikes:
But a clock — and its *case* is uncommonly hard —
Will continue to work though it *strikes*.

THE FORGE:

A ROMANCE OF THE IRON AGE.

"Who 's here, beside foul weather?" — KING LEAR.

"Mine enemy's dog, though he had bit me,
Should have stood that night against my fire." — CORDELIA.

PART I.

LIKE a dead man gone to his shroud,
The sun has sunk in a coppery cloud,
And the wind is rising squally and loud
With many a stormy token, —
Playing a wild funereal air,
Through the branches bleak, bereaved, and bare,
To the dead leaves dancing here and there —
In short, if the truth were spoken,
It 's an ugly one for anywhere,
But an awful night for the Brocken.

For, O! to stop
On that mountain top,
After the dews of evening drop,
Is always a dreary frolic —
Then what must it be when Nature groans,
And the very mountain murmurs and moans
As if it writhed with the colic —
With other strange supernatural tones,
From wood, and water, and echoing stones,
Not to forget unburied bones —
In a region so diabolic!
A place where he whom we call Old Scratch,
By help of his Witches — a precious batch —

Gives midnight concerts and sermons,
In a pulpit and orchestra built to match
A plot right worthy of him to hatch,
And well adapted, he knows, to catch
The musical, mystical Germans!

However, it 's quite
As wild a night
As ever was known on that sinister height
Since the Demon-Dance was morriced —
The earth is dark, and the sky is scowling,
And the blast through the pines is howling and growling,
As if a thousand wolves were prowling
About in the old BLACK FOREST!

Madly, sadly, the tempest raves
Through the narrow gulleys and hollow caves,
And bursts on the rocks in windy waves.
Like the billows that roar
On a gusty shore
Mourning over the mariners' graves —
Nay, more like a frantic lamentation
From a howling set
Of demons met
To wake a dead relation.

Badly, madly, the vapors fly
Over the dark distracted sky,
At a pace that no pen can paint!
Black and vague like the shadows of dreams,
Scudding over the moon that seems
Shorn of half her usual beams,
As pale as if she would faint!

The lightning flashes,
The thunder crashes.

The trees encounter with horrible clashes,
While rolling up from marish and bog,
Rank and rich,
As from Stygian ditch,
Rises a foul sulphureous fog,
Hinting that Satan himself is agog,—
But, leaving at once this heroical pitch,
The night is a very bad night, in which
You would n't turn out a dog.

Yet ONE there is abroad in the storm,
And whenever by chance
The moon gets a glance,
She spies the traveller's lonely form,
Walking, leaping, striding along,
As none can do but the super-strong;
And flapping his arms to keep him warm,
For the breeze from the north is a regular starver,
And, to tell the truth,
More keen, in sooth,
And cutting than any German carver!

However, no time it is to lag;
And on he scrambles from crag to crag,
Like one determined never to flag —
Now weathers a block
Of jutting rock,
With hardly room for a toe to wag;
But holding on by a timber-snag,
That looks like the arm of a friendly hag;
Then stooping under a drooping bough,
Or leaping over some horrid chasm,
Enough to give any heart a spasm!
And sinking down a precipice now
Keeping his feet the Deuce knows how,

In spots whence all creatures would keep aloof,
Except the goat, with his cloven hoof,
Who clings to the shallowest ledge as if
He grew like the weed on the face of the cliff!
So down, still down, the traveller goes,
Safe as the chamois amid his snows,
Though fiercer than ever the hurricane blows,
And round him eddy, with whirl and whizz.
Tornadoes of hail, and sleet, and rain,
Enough to bewilder a weaker brain,
Or blanch any other visage than his,
Which, spite of lightning, thunder, and hail,
The blinding sleet, and the freezing gale,
And the horrid abyss,
If his foot should miss,
Instead of tending at all to pale,
Like cheeks that feel the chill of affright —
Remains — the very reverse of white!

His heart is granite — his iron nerve
Feels no convulsive twitches;
And as to his foot, it does not swerve,
Though the screech-owls are flitting about him that serve
For parrots to Brocken Witches!

Nay, full in his very path he spies
The gleam of the wehr wolf's horrid eyes:
But if his members quiver —
It is not for *that* — no, it is not for *that* —
Nor rat, nor cat, as black as your hat,
Nor the snake that hissed, nor the toad that spat,
Nor glimmering candles of dead men's fat,
Nor even the flap of the vampire bat,
No anserine skin would rise thereat,
It 's the cold that makes *Him* shiver!

So down, still down, through gully and glen,
Never trodden by foot of men,
Past the eagle's nest, and the she-wolf's den,
Never caring a jot how steep
Or how narrow the track he has to keep,
Or how wide and deep
An abyss to leap,
Or what may fly, or walk, or creep,
Down he hurries through darkness and storm,
Flapping his arms to keep him warm —
Till, threading many a pass abhorrent,
At last he reaches the mountain gorge,
And takes a path along by a torrent —
The very identical path, by St. George!
Down which young Fridolin went to the Forge,
With a message meant for his own death-warrant!

Young Fridolin! young Fridolin!
So free from sauce, and sloth, and sin,
The best of pages,
Whatever their ages,
Since first that singular fashion came in —
Not he like those modern and idle young gluttons
With little jackets, so smart and spruce,
Of Lincoln green, sky-blue, or puce —
And a little gold-lace you may introduce —
Very showy, but as for use,
Not worth so many buttons!

Young Fridolin! young Fridolin!
Of his duty so true a fulfiller —
But here we need no further go,
For whoever desires the tale to know
May read it all in Schiller.
Faster now the traveller speeds,
Whither his guiding beacon leads,

For by yonder glare
In the murky air,
He knows that the Eisen Hutte is there!
With its sooty Cyclops, savage and grim,
Hosts a guest had better forbear,
Whose thoughts are set upon dainty fare —
But, stiff with cold in every limb,
The furnace fire is the bait for *Him!*

Faster and faster still he goes,
Whilst redder and redder the welkin glows,
And the lowest clouds that scud in the sky
Get crimson fringes in flitting by.
Till, lo! amid the lurid light,
The darkest object intensely dark,
Just where the bright is intensely bright,
The Forge, the Forge itself is in sight,
Like the pitch-black hull of a burning bark,
With volleying smoke, and many a spark,
Vomiting fire, red, yellow, and white!

Restless, quivering tongues of flame!
Heavenward striving still to go,
While others, reversed in the stream below,
Seem seeking a place we will not name,
But well that traveller knows the same,
Who stops and stands,
So rubbing his hands,
And snuffing the rare
Perfumes in the air,
For old familiar odors are there,
And then direct by the shortest cut,
Like Alpine marmot, whom neither rut,
Rivers, rocks, nor thickets rebut,
Makes his way to the blazing hut!

PART II.

Idly watching the furnace-flames,
The men of the stithy
Are in their smithy,
Brutal monsters, with bulky frames,
Beings Humanity scarcely claims,
But hybrids rather of demon race,
Unblessed by the holy rite of grace,
Who never had gone by Christian names,
Mark, or Matthew, Peter, or James —
Naked, foul, unshorn, unkempt,
From touch of natural shame exempt,
Things of which Delirium has dreamt —
But wherefore dwell on these verbal sketches,
When traced with frightful truth and vigor,
Costume, attitude, face, and figure,
Retsch has drawn the very wretches!
However, there they lounge about,
The grim, gigantic fellows,
Hardly hearing the storm without,
That makes so very dreadful a rout,
For the constant roar
From the furnace door,
And the blast of the monstrous bellows!

O, what a scene
That Forge had been
For Salvator Rosa's study!
With wall, and beam, and post, and pin,
And those ruffianly creatures, like Shapes of Sin!
Hair, and eyes, and rusty skin;
Illumed by a light so ruddy,
The hut, and whatever there is therein,
Looks either red-hot or bloody!

And, O! to hear the frequent burst
Of strange extravagant laughter,
Harsh and hoarse,
And resounding perforce
From echoing roof and rafter!
Though curses, the worst
That ever were curst,
And threats that Cain invented the first,
Come growling the instant after!

But again the livelier peal is rung,
For the Smith-hight Salamander,
In the jargon of some Titanic tongue,
Elsewhere never said or sung,
With the voice of a Stentor in joke has flung
Some cumbrous sort
Of sledge-hammer retort
At Red-Beard, the crew's commander.

Some frightful jest — who knows how wild,
Or obscene, from a monster so defiled,
And a horrible mouth, of such extent,
From flapping ear to ear it went,
And showed such tusks whenever it smiled —
The very mouth to devour a child!

But fair or foul, the jest gives birth
To another bellow of demon mirth,
That far outroars the weather,
As if all the hyenas that prowl the earth
Had clubbed their laughs together!

And, lo! in the middle of all the din,
Not seeming to care a single pin,
For a prospect so volcanic,
A stranger steps abruptly in,

Of an aspect rather Satanic:
And he looks, with a grin, at those Cyclops grim,
Who stare and grin again at him
With wondrous little panic.

Then up to the furnace the stranger goes,
Eager to thaw his ears and nose,
And warm his frozen fingers and toes —
While each succeeding minute
Hotter and hotter the smithy grows,
And seems to declare,
By a fiercer glare,
On wall, roof, floor, and everywhere,
It knows the Devil is in it!

Still not a word
Is uttered or heard,
But the beetle-browed foreman nods and winks,
Much as a shaggy old lion blinks,
And makes a shift
To impart his drift
To a smoky brother, who, joining the links,
Hints to a third the thing he thinks;
And whatever it be,
They all agree
In smiling with faces full of glee,
As if about to enjoy high jinks.

What sort of tricks they mean to play
By way of diversion, who can say,
Of such ferocious and barbarous folk,
Who chuckled, indeed, and never spoke
Of burning Robert the Jäger to coke,
Except as a capital practical joke!
Who never thought of Mercy, or heard her
Or any gentle emotion felt:

But, hard as the iron they had to melt,
Sported with Danger and romped with Murder!

Meanwhile the stranger,—
The Brocken Ranger,
Besides another and hotter post,
That renders him not averse to a roast,—
Creeping into the furnace almost,
Has made himself as warm as a toast —
When, unsuspicious of any danger,
And least of all of any such maggot
As treating his body like a fagot,
All at once he is seized and shoven
In pastime cruel,
Like so much fuel,
Headlong into the blazing oven!

In he goes! with a frightful shout
Mocked by the rugged ruffianly band,
As round the furnace mouth they stand,
Bar, and shovel, and ladle in hand,
To hinder their butt from crawling out,
Who, making one fierce attempt, but vain,
Receives such a blow
From Red-Beard's crow
As crashes the skull and gashes the brain,
And blind, and dizzy, and stunned with pain,
With merely an interjectional O!
Back he rolls in the flames again.
"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!" That second fall
Seems the very best joke of all,
To judge by the roar,
Twice as loud as before,
That fills the hut from the roof to the floor,
And flies a league or two out of the door

Up the mountain and over the moor —
But scarcely the jolly echoes they wake
Have well begun
To take up the fun,
Ere the shaggy felons have cause to quake,
And begin to feel that the deed they have done,
Instead of being a pleasant one,
Was a very great error — and no mistake.

For why? — in lieu
Of its former hue,
So natural, warm, and florid,
The furnace burns of brimstone blue,
And instead of the *couleur de rose* it threw,
With a cooler reflection,— justly due —
Exhibits each of the Pagan crew,
Livid, ghastly and horrid!
But vainly they close their guilty eyes
Against prophetic fears;
Or with hard and horny palms devise
To dam their enormous ears —
There are sounds in the air,
Not here or there,
Irresistible voices everywhere,
No bulwarks can ever rebut,
And to match the screams,
Tremendous gleams,
Of horrors that like the phantoms of dreams
They see with their eyelids shut!
For awful coveys of terrible things,
With forkéd tongues and venomous stings,
On hagweed, broomsticks, and leathern wings,
Are hovering round the hut!

Shapes! that within the focus bright
Of the Forge, are like shadows and blots;
But further off, in the shades of night,
Clothed with their own phosphoric light,
Are seen in the darkest spots.
Sounds! that fill the air with noises,
Strange and indescribable voices,
From hags, in a diabolical clatter —
Cats that spit curses, and apes that chatter
Scraps of cabalistical matter —
Owls that screech, and dogs that yell —
Skeleton hounds that will never be fatter —
All the domestic tribes of Hell,
Shrieking for flesh to tear and tatter,
Bones to shatter,
And limbs to scatter,
And who it is that must furnish the latter
Those blue-looking men know well!
Those blue-looking men that huddle together,
For all their sturdy limbs and thews,
Their unshorn locks, like Nazarene Jews,
And buffalo beards, and hides of leather,
Huddled all in a heap together,
Like timid lamb, and ewe, and wether.
And as females say,
In a similar way,
Fit for knocking down with a feather!
In and out, in and out,
The gathering goblins hover about,
Every minute augmenting the rout;
For like a spell
The unearthly smell
That fumes from the furnace, chimney and mouth,

Draws them in — an infernal legion —
From East, and West, and North, and South,
Like carrion birds from every region,
Till not a yard square
Of the sickening air
But has a Demon or two for its share,
Breathing fury, woe, and despair.
Never, never was such a sight!
It beats the very Walpurgis Night,
Displayed in the story of Doctor Faustus;
For the scene to describe,
Of the awful tribe,
If we were *two* Göthes would quite exhaust us!
Suffice it, amid that dreary swarm,
There musters each foul repulsive form
That ever a fancy overwarm
Begot in its worst delirium:
Besides some others of monstrous size,
Never before revealed to eyes,
Of the genus Megatherium!

Meanwhile the demons, filthy and foul,
Gorgon, Chimera, Harpy, and Ghoul,
Are not contented to gibber and howl
As a dirge for their late commander;
But one of the bevy — witch or wizard,
Disguised as a monstrous flying lizard,
Springs on the grisly Salamander,
Who stoutly fights, and struggles, and kicks,
And tries the best of his wrestling tricks,—
No paltry strife,
But for life, dear life,—
But the ruthless talons refuse to unfix,
Till, far beyond a surgical case,
With starting eyes and black in the face,

Down he tumbles as dead as bricks!
A pretty sight for his mates to view!
Those shaggy murderers looking so blue,
And for him above all,
Red-bearded and tall,
With whom, at that very particular nick,
There is such an unlucky crow to pick,
As the one of iron that did the trick
In a recent bloody affair —
No wonder, feeling a little sick,
With pulses beating uncommonly quick,
And breath he never found so thick,
He longs for the open air!

Three paces, or four,
And he gains the door;
But ere he accomplishes one,
The sound of a blow comes, heavy and dull,
And, clasping his fingers round his skull,
However the deed was done,
That gave him that florid
Red gash on the forehead —
With a roll of the eyeballs perfectly horrid,
There 's a tremulous quiver,
The last death-shiver,
And Red-Beard's course is run!

Halloo! Halloo!
They have done for two!
But a heavyish job remains to do!
For yonder, sledge and shovel in hand,
Like elder Sons of Giant Despair,
A couple of Cyclops make a stand,
And, fiercely hammering here and there,
Keep at bay the Powers of Air —

But desperation is all in vain! —
They faint — they choke,
For the sulphurous smoke
Is poisoning heart, and lung, and brain;
They reel, they sink, they gasp, they smother;
One for a moment survives his brother,
Then rolls a corpse across the other!

Hulloo! Hulloo!
And Hullabaloo!
There is only one more thing to do —
And, seized by beak, and talon, and claw,
Bony hand, and hairy paw,
Yea, crooked horn, and tusky jaw,
The four huge bodies are hauled and shoven
Each after each in the roaring oven!

* * * *

The Eisen Hutte is standing still;
Go to the Hartz whenever you will,
And there it is beside a hill,
And a rapid stream that turns many a mill;
The self-same Forge,— you 'll know it at sight —
Casting upward, day and night,
Flames of red, and yellow, and white!

Ay, half a mile from the mountain gorge,
There it is, the famous Forge,
With its furnace,— the same that blazed of yore,—
Hugely fed with fuel and ore;
But ever since that tremendous revel,
Whatever iron is melted therein,—
As travellers know who have been to Berlin. —
Is all *as black as the Devil!*

TO ——.

COMPOSED AT ROTTERDAM.

I GAZE upon a city,— a city new and strange;
Down many a watery vista my fancy takes a range:
From side to side I saunter, and wonder where I am;
And can *you* be in England, and *I* at Rotterdam!

Before me lie dark waters in broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams sleep, restless in their sleep;
A sort of vulgar Venice reminds me where I am;
Yes, yes, you are in England, and I 'm at Rotterdam.

Tall houses with quaint gables, where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges, and trees in formal line,
And masts of spicy vessels from western Surinam,
All tell me you 're in England, but I 'm in Rotterdam.

Those sailors, how outlandish the face and form of each!
They deal in foreign gestures, and use a foreign speech;
A tongue not learned near Isis, or studied by the Cam,
Declares that you 're in England, and I 'm at Rotterdam.

And now across a market my doubtful way I trace,
Where stands a solemn statue, the Genius of the place;
And to the great Erasmus I offer my salaam;
Who tells me you 're in England, but I 'm at Rotterdam.

The coffee-room is open — I mingle in its crowd,—
The dominos are noisy — the hookahs raise a cloud;
The flavor now of Fearon's, that mingles with my dram,
Reminds me you 're in England, and I 'm at Rotterdam.

Then here it goes, a bumper — the toast it shall be mine,
In schiedam, or in sherry, tokay, or hock of Rhine;
It well deserves the brightest, where sunbeam ever swam —
"The Girl I love in England" I drink at Rotterdam!

March, 1835.

THE SEASON.

SUMMER 'S gone and over!
Fogs are falling down;
And with russet tinges
Autumn 's doing brown.

Boughs are daily rifled
By the gusty thieves,
And the Book of Nature
Getteth short of leaves.

Round the tops of houses,
Swallows, as they flit,
Give, like yearly tenants,
Notices to quit.

Skies, of fickle temper,
Weep by turns, and laugh—
Night and Day together
Taking half-and-half.

So September endeth —
Cold, and most perverse —
But the month that follows
Sure will pinch us worse!

LOVE.

O, LOVE! what art thou, Love? the ace of hearts,
Trumping earth's kings and queens, and all its suits;
A player, masquerading many parts
In life's odd carnival; — a boy that shoots,
From ladies' eyes, such mortal woundy darts;
A gardener, pulling heart's-ease up by the roots;
The Puck of Passion — partly false — part real —
A marriageable maiden's "beau ideal"?

O, Love! what art thou, Love? a wicked thing,
Making green misses spoil their work at school;
A melancholy man, cross-gartering!
Grave ripe-faced Wisdom made an April fool?
A youngster, tilting at a wedding-ring?
A sinner, sitting on a cuttie-stool?
A Ferdinand de Something in a hovel,
Helping Matilda Rose to make a novel?

O, Love! what art thou, Love? one that is bad
With palpitations of the heart — like mine —
A poor bewildered maid, making so sad
A necklace of her garters — fell design!
A poet, gone unreasonably mad,
Ending his sonnets with a hempen line?
O, Love! — but whither, now? forgive me, pray;
I'm not the first that Love hath led astray.

FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN.

AN OLD BALLAD.

YOUNG Ben he was a nice young man,
A carpenter by trade;
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetched a walk one day,
They met a press-gang crew;
And Sally she did faint away,
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The boatswain swore with wicked words,
Enough to shock a saint,
That though she did seem in a fit,
'T was nothing but a feint.

"Come, girl," said he, "hold up your head
He 'll be as good as me;
For when your swain is in our boat,
A boatswain he will be."

So when they 'd made their game of her,
And taken off her elf,
She roused, and found she only was
A coming to herself.

"And is he gone, and is he gone?"
She cried, and wept outright:
"Then I will to the water side,
And see him out of sight."

A waterman came up to her,—
"Now, young woman," said he,
"If you weep on so, you will make
Eye-water in the sea."

"Alas! they 've taken my beau, Ben,
To sail with old Benbow;"
And her woe began to run afresh,
As if she 'd said, Gee woe!

Says he, "They 've only taken him
To the Tender-ship, you see;"
"The Tender-ship," cried Sally Brown,
"What a hard-ship that must be!

"O! would I were a mermaid now,
For then I 'd follow him;
But, O!—I 'm not a fish-woman,
And so I cannot swim.

"Alas! I was not born beneath
The virgin and the scales,
So I must curse my cruel stars,
And walk about in Wales."

Now Ben had sailed to many a place
That 's underneath the world;
But in two years the ship came home,
And all her sails were furled.

But when he called on Sally Brown,
To see how she got on,
He found she 'd got another Ben,
Whose Christian name was John.

"O, Sally Brown, O, Sally Brown,
How could you serve me so?
I 've met with many a breeze before,
But never such a blow!"

Then reading on his 'bacco-box,
He heaved a heavy sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing "All 's Well,"
But could not, though he tried;
His head was turned, and so he chewed
His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happened in his berth,
At forty-odd befell:
They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton tolled the bell.

BIANCA'S DREAM.

A VENETIAN STORY.

Bianca! — fair Bianca! — who could dwell
With safety on her dark and hazel gaze,
Nor find there lurked in it a witching spell,
Fatal to balmy nights and blessed days?

The peaceful breath that made the bosom swell
She turned to gas, and set it in a blaze;
Each eye of hers had Love's Eupyrion in it,
That he could light his link at in a minute.

So that, wherever in her charms she shone,
A thousand breasts were kindled into flame;
Maidens who cursed her looks forgot their own,
And beaux were turned to flambeaux where she came;
All hearts indeed were conquered but her own,
Which none could ever temper down or tame:
In short, to take our haberdasher's hints,
She might have written over it,— "From Flints."

She was, in truth, the wonder of her sex,
At least in Venice — where with eyes of brown,
Tenderly languid, ladies seldom vex
An amorous gentle with a needless frown;
Where gondolas convey guitars by pecks,
And love at casements climbeth up and down,
Whom, for his tricks and custom in that kind,
Some have considered a Venetian blind.

Howbeit, this difference was quickly taught,
Amongst more youths who had this cruel jailer,
To hapless Julio — all in vain he sought
With each new moon his hatter and his tailor;
In vain the richest padusoy he bought,
And went in bran-new beaver to assail her —
As if to show that Love had made him *smart*
All over — and not merely round his heart.

In vain he labored through the sylvan park
Bianca haunted in — that where she came
Her learned eyes in wandering might mark
The twisted cipher of her maiden name.

Wholesomely going through a course of bark:
No one was touched or troubled by his flame,
Except the Dryads, those old maids that grow
In trees,— like wooden dolls in embryo.

In vain complaining elegies he writ,
And taught his tuneful instrument to grieve,
And sang in quavers how his heart was split,
Constant beneath her lattice with each eve;
She mocked his wooing with her wicked wit,
And slashed his suit so that it matched his sleeve,
Till he grew silent at the vesper star,
And, quite despairing, hamstringed his guitar.

Bianca's heart was coldly frosted o'er
With snows unmelting —an eternal sheet;
But his was red within him, like the core
Of old Vesuvius, with perpetual heat;
And oft he longed internally to pour
His flames and glowing lava at her feet,
But when his burnings he began to spout,
She stopped his mouth, and put the *crater* out.

Meanwhile he wasted in the eyes of men,
So thin, he seemed a sort of skeleton-key
Suspended at Death's door — so pale — and then
He turned as nervous as an aspen-tree;
The life of man is three-score years and ten,
But he was perishing at twenty-three,
For people truly said, as grief grew stronger,
"It could not shorten his poor life — much longer."

For why, he neither slept, nor drank, nor fed,
Nor relished any kind of mirth below;
Fire in his heart, and frenzy in his head,
Love had become his universal foe,

Salt in his sugar — nightmare in his bed,
At last, no wonder wretched Julio,
A sorrow-ridden thing, in utter dearth
Of hope,— made up his mind to cut her girth!

For hapless lovers always died of old,
Sooner than chew reflection's bitter cud;
So Thisbe stuck herself, what time 't is told
The tender-hearted mulberries wept blood:
And so poor Sappho, when her boy was cold,
Drowned her salt tear-drops in a salter flood,
Their fame still breathing, though their breath be past,
For those old *suitors* lived beyond their last.

So Julio went to drown,—when life was dull,
But took his corks, and merely had a bath;
And once, he pulled a trigger at his skull,
But merely broke a window in his wrath;
And once, his hopeless being to annul,
He tied a pack-thread to a beam of lath,
A line so ample, 't was a query whether
'T was meant to be a halter or a tether.

Smile not in scorn, that Julio did not thrust
His sorrows through — 't is horrible to die;
And come down with our little all of dust,
That dun of all the duns to satisfy;
To leave life's pleasant city as we must,
In Death's most dreary sponging-house to lie,
Where even all our personals must go
To pay the debt of nature that we owe!

So Julio lived: — 't was nothing but a pet
He took at life — a momentary spite;
Besides, he hoped that time would some day get
The better of love's flame, however bright.

A thing that time has never compassed yet,
For love, we know, is an immortal light.
Like that old fire, that, quite beyond a doubt,
Was always in,—for none have found it out.

Meanwhile, Bianca dreamed—'t was once when night
Along the darkened plain began to creep,
Like a young Hottentot, whose eyes are bright,
Although in skin as sooty as a sweep:
The flowers had shut their eyes — the zephyr light
Was gone, for it had rocked the leaves to sleep,
And all the little birds had laid their heads
Under their wings — sleeping in feather beds.

Lone in her chamber sate the dark-eyed maid,
By easy stages jaunting through her prayers,
But listening side long to a serenade,
That robbed the saints a little of their shares;
For Julio underneath the lattice played
His Deh Vieni, and such amorous airs,
Born only underneath Italian skies,
Where every fiddle has a Bridge of Sighs.

Sweet was the tune — the words were even sweeter,
Praising her eyes, her lips, her nose, her hair,
With all the common tropes wherewith in metre
The hackney poets overcharge their fair.
Her shape was like Diana's, but completer;
Her brow with Grecian Helen's might compare.
Cupid, alas! was cruel Sagittarius,
Julio — the weeping waterman Aquarius.

Now, after listing to such laudings rare,
'T was very natural indeed to go —
What if she did postpone one little prayer! —
To ask her mirror 'if it was not so?'

'T was a large mirror, none the worse for wear,
Reflecting her at once from top to toe:
And there she gazed upon that glossy track,
That showed her front face, though it "gave her back."

And long her lovely eyes were held in thrall,
By that dear page where first the woman reads:
That Julio was no flatterer, none at all,
She told herself — and then she told her beads;
Meanwhile, the nerves insensibly let fall
Two curtains fairer than the lily breeds;
For sleep had crept and kissed her unawares,
Just at the half-way milestone of her prayers.

Then like a drooping rose so bended she,
Till her bowed head upon her hand reposed;
But still she plainly saw, or seemed to see,
That fair reflection, though her eyes were closed,
A beauty bright, as it was wont to be,
A portrait Fancy painted while she dozed:
'T is very natural, some people say,
To dream of what we dwell on in the day.

Still shone her face — yet not, alas! the same,
But 'gan some dreary touches to assume,
And sadder thoughts with sadder changes came —
Her eyes resigned their light, her lips their bloom,
Her teeth fell out, her tresses did the same,
Her cheeks were tinged with bile, her eyes with rheum;
There was a throbbing at her heart within,
For, O! there was a shooting in her chin.

And, lo! upon her sad desponding brow
The cruel trenches of besieging age,
With seams, but most unseemly, 'gan to show
Her place was booking for the seventh stage:

And where her raven tresses used to flow,
Some locks that time had left her in his rage,
And some mock ringlets, made her forehead shady,
A compound (like our Psalms) of tête and braidy.

Then for her shape — alas! how Saturn wrecks,
And bends, and corkscrews all the frame about,
Doubles the hams, and crooks the straightest necks,
Draws in the nape, and pushes forth the snout,
Makes backs and stomachs concave or convex:
Witness those pensioners called In and Out,
Who, all day watching first and second rater,
Quaintly unbend themselves — but grow no straighter.

So time with fair Bianca dealt, and made
Her shape a bow, that once was like an arrow;
His iron hand upon her spine he laid,
And twisted all awry her "winsome marrow."
In truth it was a change! — she had obeyed
The holy Pope before her chest grew narrow,
But spectacles and palsy seemed to make her
Something between a Glassite and a Quaker.

Her grief and gall meanwhile were quite extreme,
And she had ample reason for her trouble;
For what sad maiden can endure to seem
Set in for singleness, though growing double?
The fancy maddened her; but now the dream,
Grown thin by getting bigger, like a bubble,
Burst,—but still left some fragments of its size,
That, like the soap-suds, smarted, in her eyes.

And here — just here — as she began to heed
The real world, her clock chimed out its score;
A clock it was of the Venetian breed,
That cried the hour from one to twenty-four;

The works moreover standing in some need
Of workmanship, it struck some dozens more;
A warning voice that clenched Bianca's fears,
Such strokes referring doubtless to her years.

At fifteen chimes she was but half a nun,
By twenty she had quite renounced the veil;
She thought of Julio just at twenty-one,
And thirty made her very sad and pale,
To paint that ruin where her charms would run;
At forty all the maid began to fail,
And thought no higher, as the late dream crossed her,
Of single blessedness, than single Gloster.

And so Bianca changed; — the next sweet even,
With Julio in a black Venetian bark,
Rowed slow and stealthily — the hour, eleven,
Just sounding from the tower old St. Mark,
She sate with eyes turned quietly to heaven,
Perchance rejoicing in the grateful dark
That veiled her blushing cheek, — for Julio brought her
Of course — to break the ice upon the water.

But what a puzzle is one's serious mind
To open! — oysters, when the ice is thick,
Are not so difficult and disinclined;
And Julio felt the declaration stick
About his throat in a most awful kind;
However, he contrived by bits to pick
His trouble forth, — much like a rotten cork
Groped from a long-necked bottle with a fork.

But Love is still the quickest of all readers;
And Julio spent, besides those signs profuse
That English telegraphs and foreign pleaders,
In help of language, are so apt to use,

Arms, shoulders, fingers, all were interceders,
Nods, shrugs and bends,— Bianca could not choose
But soften to his suit with more facility,
He told his story with so much agility.

"Be thou my park, and I will be thy dear,
(So he began at last to speak or quote;)
Be thou my bark, and I thy gondolier,
(For passion takes this figurative note;)
Be thou my light, and I thy chandelier·
Be thou my dove, and I will be thy cote;
My lily be, and I will be thy river;
Be thou my life — and I will be thy liver."

This, with more tender logic of the kind,
He poured into her small and shell-like ear,
That timidly against his lips inclined:
Meanwhile her eyes glanced on the silver sphere
That even now began to steal behind
A dewy vapor, which was lingering near,
Wherein the dull moon crept all dim and pale,
Just like a virgin putting on the veil: —

Bidding adieu to all her sparks — the stars,
That erst had wooed and worshipped in her train,
Saturn and Hesperus, and gallant Mars —
Never to flirt with heavenly eyes again.
Meanwhile, remindful of the convent bars,
Bianca did not watch these signs in vain,
But turned to Julio at the dark eclipse,
With words, like verbal kisses, on her lips.

He took the hint full speedily, and, backed
By love, and night, and the occasion's meetness,
Bestowed a something on her cheek that smacked
(Though quite in silence) of ambrosial sweetness;
That made her think all other kisses lacked

Till then, but what she knew not, of completeness:
Being used but sisterly salutes to feel,
Insipid things — like sandwiches of veal.

He took her hand, and soon she felt him wring
The pretty fingers all, instead of one;
Anon his stealthy arm began to cling
About her waist that had been clasped by none;
Their dear confessions I forbear to sing,
Since cold description would but be outrun;
For bliss and Irish watches have the power
In twenty minutes to lose half an hour!

OVER THE WAY.

"I sat over against a window where there stood a pot with very pretty flowers; and had my eyes fixed on it, when on a sudden the window opened, and a young lady appeared whose beauty struck me."—ARABIAN NIGHTS.

ALAS! the flames of an unhappy lover
About my heart and on my vitals prey;
I've caught a fever that I can't get over,
Over the way!

O! why are eyes of hazel? noses Grecian?
I've lost my rest by night, my peace by day,
For want of some brown Holland or Venetian,
Over the way!

I've gazed too often, till my heart's as lost
As any needle in a stack of hay:
Crosses belong to love, and mine is crossed
Over the way!

I cannot read or write, or thoughts relax—
Of what avail Lord Althorpe or Earl Grey?
They cannot ease me of *my* window-tax
Over the way!

Even on Sunday my devotions vary,
And from St. Bennet Flint they go astray
To dear St. Mary Overy — the Mary
Over the way!

O! if my godmother were but a fairy,
With magic wand, how I would beg and pray
That she would change me into that canary
Over the way!

I envy everything that 's near Miss Lindo,
A pug, a poll, a squirrel or a jay —
Blest blue-bottles! that buzz about the window
Over the way!

Even at even, for there be no shutters,
I see her reading on, from grave to gay,
Some tale or poem, till the candle gutters,
Over the way!

And then — O! then — while the clear waxen taper
Emits, two stories high, a starlike ray,
I see twelve auburn curls put into paper
Over the way!

But how breathe unto her my deep regards,
Or ask her for a whispered ay or nay,—
Or offer her my hand, some thirty yards
Over the way!

Cold as the pole she is to my adoring; —
Like Captain Lyon, at Repulse's Bay,
I meet an icy end to my exploring
Over the way!

Each dirty little Savoyard that dances
She looks on — Punch — or chimney-sweeps in May,
Zounds! wherefore cannot I attract her glances
Over the way?

Half out she leans to watch a tumbling brat,
Or yelping cur, run over by a dray;
But I 'm in love — she never pities that!
Over the way!

I go to the same church — a love-lost labor;
Haunt all her walks, and dodge her at the play;
She does not seem to know she has a neighbor
Over the way!

At private theatres she never acts;
No Crown-and-Anchor balls her fancy sway;
She never visits gentlemen with tracts
Over the way!

To billets-doux by post she shows no favor —
In short, there is no plot that I can lay
To break my window-pains to my enslaver
Over the way!

I play the flute — she heeds not my chromatics —
No friend an introduction can purvey;
I wish a fire would break out in the attics
Over the way!

My wasted form ought of itself to touch her;
My baker feels my appetite's decay;
And as for butcher's meat — O! she 's my butcher
Over the way!

At beef I turn; at lamb or veal I pout;
I never ring now to bring up the tray;
My stomach grumbles at my dining out
Over the way!

I 'm weary of my life; without regret
I could resign this miserable clay
To lie within that box of mignonette
Over the way!

I've fitted bullets to my pistol-bore;
I've vowed at times to rush where trumpets bray,
Quite sick of Number One — and Number Four
Over the way!

Sometimes my fancy builds up castles airy,
Sometimes it only paints a ferme ornée,
A horse — a cow — six fowls — a pig — and Mary,
Over the way!

Sometimes I dream of her in bridal white,
Standing before the altar, like a fay;
Sometimes of balls, and neighborly invite
Over the way!

I've cooed with her in dreams, like any turtle;
I've snatched her from the Clyde, the Tweed, and Tay
Thrice I have made a grove of that one myrtle
Over the way!

Thrice I have rowed her in a fairy shallop,
Thrice raced to Gretna in a neat "po-shay,"
And showered crowns to make the horses gallop
Over the way!

And thrice I've started up from dreams appalling
Of killing rivals in a bloody fray —
There is a young man very fond of calling
Over the way!

O! happy man — above all kings in glory,
Whoever in her ear may say his say,
And add a tale of love to that one story
Over the way!

Nabob of Arcot — Despot of Japan —
Sultan of Persia — Emperor of Cathay —
Much rather would I be the happy man
Over the way!

With such a lot my heart would be in clover —
But what — O, horror! — what do I survey!
Postilions and white favors! — all is over
Over the way!

EPICUREAN REMINISCENCES OF A SENTIMENTALIST.

"My *Tables! Meat* it is, *I set it* down!" — HAMLET.

I THINK it was Spring — but not certain I am —
When my passion began first to work;
But I know we were certainly looking for lamb,
And the season was over for pork.

'T was at Christmas, I think, when I met with Miss Chase,
Yes, — for Morris had asked me to dine, —
And I thought I had never beheld such a face,
Or so noble a turkey and chine.

Placed close by her side, it made others quite wild
With sheer envy to witness my luck;
How she blushed as I gave her some turtle, and smiled
As I afterwards offered some duck.

I looked and I languished, alas! to my cost,
Through three courses of dishes and meats;
Getting deeper in love — but my heart was quite lost,
When it came to the trifle and sweets!

With a rent-roll that told of my houses and land,
To her parents I told my designs —
And then to herself I presented my hand,
With a very fine pottle of pines!

I asked her to have me for weal or for woe,
And she did not object in the least; —
I can't tell the date — but we married, I know,
Just in time to have game at the feast.

We went to ———, it certainly was the sea-side;
For the next, the most blessed of morns,
I remember how fondly I gazed at my bride,
Sitting down to a plateful of prawns.

O, never may memory lose sight of that year,
But still hallow the time as it ought!
That season the "grass" was remarkably dear,
And the peas at a guinea a quart.

So happy, like hours, all our days seemed to haste,
A fond pair, such as poets have drawn,
So united in heart — so congenial in taste —
We were both of us partial to brawn!

A long life I looked for of bliss with my bride,
But then Death — I ne'er dreamt about that!
O, there 's nothing is certain in life, as I cried
When my turbot eloped with the cat!

My dearest took ill at the turn of the year,
But the cause no physician could nab;
But something it seemed like consumption, I fear,—
It was just after supping on crab.

In vain she was doctored, in vain she was dosed,
Still her strength and her appetite pined;
She lost relish for what she had relished the most,
Even salmon she deeply declined!

For months still I lingered in hope and in doubt,
While her form it grew wasted and thin;
But the last dying spark of existence went out,
As the oysters were just coming in!

She died, and she left me the saddest of men,
To indulge in a widower's moan;
O, I felt all the power of solitude then,
As I ate my first natives alone!

But when I beheld Virtue's friends in their cloaks,
And with sorrowful crape on their hats,
O my grief poured a flood! and the out-of-door folks
Were all crying — I think it was sprats!

THE CARELESSE NURSE MAYD.

I SAWE a Mayd sitte on a Bank,
Beguiled by Wooer fayne and fond;
And whiles His flatterynge Vowes She drank,
Her Nurselynge slipt within a Pond!

All Even Tide they Talkde and Kist,
For She was fayre and He was Kinde;
The Sunne went down before She wist
Another Sonne had sett behinde!

With angrie Hands and frownynge Browe,
That deemd Her owne the Urchine's Sinne,
She pluckt Him out, but he was nowe
Past being Whipt for fallynge in.

She then beginnes to wayle the Ladde
With Shrikes that Echo answerede round —
O! foolishe Mayd to be the sadde
The Momente that her Care was drownd!

ODE TO PERRY,

THE INVENTOR OF THE PATENT PERRYAN PEN.

"In this good work, Penn appears the greatest, usefullest of God's instruments. Firm and unbending when the exigency requires it — soft and yielding when rigid inflexibility is not a desideratum — fluent and flowing, at need, for eloquent rapidity — slow and retentive in cases of deliberation — never spluttering or by amplification going wide of the mark — never splitting, if it can be helped, with any one, but ready to wear itself out rather in their service — all things as it were with all men, — ready to embrace the hand of Jew, Christian, or Mahometan, — heavy with the German, light with the Italian, oblique with the English, upright with the Roman, backward in coming forward with the Hebrew, — in short, for flexibility, amiability, constitutional durability, general ability, and universal utility, it would be hard to find a parallel to the great Penn." — PERRY'S CHARACTERISTICS OF A SETTLER.

O! PATENT Pen-inventing Perrian Perry!
Friend of the goose and gander,
That now unplucked of their quill-feathers wander,
Cackling, and gabbling, dabbling, making merry,
About the happy fen,
Untroubled for one penny-worth of pen,
For which they chant thy praise all Britain through,
From Goose-Green unto Gander-Cleugh! —

Friend to all Author-kind, —
Whether of Poet or of Proser, —
Thou art composer unto the composer
Of pens, — yea, patent vehicles for Mind
To carry it on jaunts, or more extensive
*Perry*grinations through the realms of thought;
Each plying from the Comic to the Pensive,
An Omnibus of intellectual sort!

Modern improvements in their course we feel;
And while to iron-railroads heavy wares,

Dry goods, and human bodies, pay their fares,
Mind flies on steel,
To Penrith, Penrhyn, even to Penzance;
Nay, penetrates, perchance,
To Pennsylvania, or, without rash vaunts,
To where the Penguin haunts!

In times bygone, when each man cut his quill,
With little Perryan skill,
What horrid, awkward, bungling tools of trade
Appeared the writing implements home-made!
What Pens were sliced, hewed, hacked, and haggled out,
Slit or unslit, with many a various snout,
Aquiline, Roman, crooked, square, and snubby,
Stumpy and stubby;
Some capable of ladye-billets neat,
Some only fit for ledger-keeping clerk,
And some to grub down Peter Stubbs his mark,
Or smudge through some illegible receipt;
Others in florid caligraphic plans,
Equal to ships, and wiggy heads, and swans!

To try in any common inkstands, then,
With all their miscellaneous stocks,
To find a decent pen,
Was like a dip into a lucky box;
You drew,—and got one very curly,
And split like endive in some hurly-burly;
The next unslit, and square at end, a spade;
The third, incipient pop-gun, not yet made;
The fourth a broom; the fifth of no avail,
Turned upwards, like a rabbit's tail;
And last, not least, by way of a relief,
A stump that Master Richard, James or John,

Had tried his candle-cookery upon
Making "roast-beef!"

Not so thy Perryan Pens!
True to their M's and N's,
They do not with a whizzing zig-zag split,
Straddle, turn up their noses, sulk, and spit,
Or drop large dots,
Huge full-stop blots,
Where even semicolons were unfit.
They will not frizzle up, or, broom-like, drudge
In sable sludge —
Nay, bought at proper "Patent Perryan" shops,
They write good grammar, sense, and mind their stops
Compose both prose and verse, the sad and merry —
For when the editor, whose pains compile
The grown-up Annual, or the Juvenile,
Vaunteth his articles, not women's, men's,
But lays "by the most celebrated Pens,"
What means he but thy Patent Pens, my Perry?

Pleasant they are to feel!
So firm! so flexible! composed of steel
So finely tempered — fit for tenderest Miss
To give her passion breath,
Or kings to sign the warrant stern of death —
But their supremest merit still is this,
Write with them all your days,
Tragedy, Comedy, all kinds of plays —
(No dramatist should ever be without 'em) —
And, just conceive the bliss,—
There is so little of the goose about 'em,
One 's safe from any hiss!

Ah! who can paint that first great awful night,
Big with a blessing or a blight,
When the poor dramatist, all fume and fret,
Fuss, fidget, fancy, fever, funking, fright,
Ferment, fault-fearing, faintness — more f's yet
Flushed, frigid, flurried, flinching, fitful, flat,
Add famished, fuddled, and fatigued, to that;
Funeral, fate-foreboding — sits in doubt,
Or rather doubt with hope, a wretched marriage,
To see his play upon the stage come out;
No stage to him! it is Thalia's carriage,
And he is sitting on the spikes behind it,
Striving to look as if he did n't mind it!

Witness how Beazley vents upon his hat
His nervousness, meanwhile his fate is dealt:
He kneads, moulds, pummels it, and sits it flat,
Squeezes and twists it up, until the felt,
That went a beaver in, comes out a rat!
Miss Mitford had mis-givings, and in fright,
Upon Rienzi's night,
Gnawed up one long kid glove, and all her bag,
Quite to a rag.
Knowles has confessed he trembled as for life,
Afraid of his own "Wife;"
Poole told me that he felt a monstrous pail
Of water backing him, all down his spine,—
"The ice-brook's temper" — pleasant to the chine!
For fear that Simpson and his Co. should fail.
Did Lord Glengall not frame a mental prayer,
Wishing devoutly he was Lord knows where?
Nay, did not Jerrold, in enormous drouth,
While doubtful of Nell Gwynne's eventful luck,
Squeeze out and suck

More oranges with his one fevered mouth
Than Nelly had to hawk from north to south?
Yea, Buckstone, changing color like a mullet,
Refused, on an occasion, once, twice, thrice,
From his best friend, an ice,
Lest it should hiss in his own red-hot gullet.

Doth punning Peake not sit upon the points
Of his own jokes, and shake in all his joints,
During their trial?
'T is past denial.
And does not Pocock, feeling, like a peacock,
All eyes upon him, turn to very meacock?
And does not Planché, tremulous and blank,
Meanwhile his personages tread the boards,
Seem goaded by sharp swords,
And called upon himself to "walk the plank"?
As for the Dances, Charles and George to boot,
What have they more
Of ease and rest, for sole of either foot,
Than bear that capers on a hotted floor!

Thus pending — does not Mathews, at sad shift
For voice, croak like a frog in waters fenny? —
Serle seem upon the surly seas adrift? —
And Kenny think he's going to Kilkenny? —
Haynes Bayly feel Old ditto, with the note
Of Cotton in his ear, a mortal grapple
About his arms, and Adam's apple
Big as a fine Dutch codling in his throat?
Did Rodwell, on his chimney-piece, desire
Or not to take a jump into the fire?
Did Wade feel as composed as music can?
And was not Bernard his own Nervous Man!

Lastly, don't Farley, a bewildered elf,
Quake at the Pantomime he loves to cater,
And ere its changes ring transform himself?—
A frightful mug of human delf?
A spirit-bottle — empty of "the cratur"?
A leaden-platter ready for the shelf?
A thunderstruck dumb-waiter?

To clench the fact,
Myself, once guilty of one small rash act,
Committed at the Surrey,
Quite in a hurry,
Felt all this flurry,
Corporal worry,
And spiritual scurry,
Dram-devil — attic curry!
All going well,
From prompter's bell,
Until befell
A hissing at some dull imperfect dunce —
There's no denying
I felt in all four elements at once!
My head was swimming, while my arms were flying!
My legs for running — all the rest was frying!

Thrice welcome, then, for this peculiar use,
Thy pens so innocent of goose!
For this shall dramatists, when they make merry,
Discarding port and sherry,
Drink — "Perry!"
Perry, whose fame, pennated, is let loose
To distant lands,
Perry, admitted on all hands,
Text, running, German, Roman,
For Patent Perryans approached by no man!

And when, ah me! far distant be the hour!
Pluto shall call thee to his gloomy bower,
Many shall be thy pensive mourners, many!
And Penury itself shall club its penny
To raise thy monument in lofty place,
Higher than York's or any son of War;
Whilst time all meaner effigies shall bury,
On due pentagonal base
Shall stand the Parian, Perryan, periwigged Perry,
Perched on the proudest peak of Penman Mawr!

NUMBER ONE.

VERSIFIED FROM THE PROSE OF A YOUNG LADY.

'T 's very hard! — and so it is, to live in such a row,—
And witness this that every miss but me has got a beau.—
For Love goes calling up and down, but here he seems to shun;
I 'm sure he has been asked enough to call at Number One!

I 'm sick of all the double knocks that come to Number Four! —
At Number Three, I often see a lover at the door; —
And one in blue, at Number Two, calls daily like a dun,—
It 's very hard they come so near, and not to Number One!

Miss Bell, I hear, has got a dear exactly to her mind,—
By sitting at the window-pane without a bit of blind; —
But I go in the balcony, which she has never done,
Yet arts that thrive at Number Five don't take at Number One!

'T is hard, with plenty in the street, and plenty passing by,—
There 's nice young men at Number Ten, but only rather shy; —

And Mrs. Smith across the way has got a grown-up son,
But, la! he hardly seems to know there is a Number One!

There 's Mr. Wick at Number Nine, but he 's intent on pelf,
And though he 's pious will not love his neighbor as himself.—
At Number Seven there was a sale — the goods had quite a run!
And here I 've got my single lot on hand at Number One!

My mother often sits at work and talks of props and stays,
And what a comfort I shall be in her declining days: —
The very maids about the house have set me down a nun,
The sweethearts all belong to them that call at Number One!

Once only, when the flue took fire, one Friday afternoon,
Young Mr. Long came kindly in and told me not to swoon:
Why can't he come again without the Phœnix and the Sun?
We cannot always have a flue on fire at Number One!

I am not old, I am not plain, nor awkward in my gait —
I am not crooked, like the bride that went from Number Eight: —
I 'm sure white satin made her look as brown as any bun —
But even beauty has no chance, I think, at Number One!

At Number Six they say Miss Rose has slain a score of hearts,
And Cupid, for her sake, has been quite prodigal of darts.
The imp they show with bended bow, I wish he had a gun!
But if he had, he 'd never deign to shoot with Number One.

It 's very hard, and so it is, to live in such a row!
And here 's a ballad-singer come to aggravate my woe; —
O, take away your foolish song and tones enough to stun —
There is "Nae luck about the house," I know, at Number One!

LINES ON THE CELEBRATION OF PEACE.

BY DORCAS DOVE.

AND is it thus ye welcome Peace,
From mouths of forty-pounding Bores?
O, cease, exploding Cannons, cease!
Lest Peace, affrighted, shun our shores!

Not so the quiet Queen should come;
But like a Nurse to still our Fears,
With shoes of List, demurely dumb,
And Wool or Cotton in her Ears!

She asks for no triumphal Arch;
No Steeples for their ropy Tongues;
Down, Drumsticks, down! She needs no March,
Or blasted Trumps from brazen Lungs

She wants no Noise of mobbing Throats
To tell that She is drawing nigh:
Why this Parade of scarlet Coats,
When War has closed his bloodshot Eye?

Returning to Domestic Loves,
When War has ceased with all its Ills,
Captains should come like sucking Doves,
With Olive Branches in their Bills.

No need there is of vulgar Shout,
Bells, Cannons, Trumpets, Fife and Drum,
And Soldiers marching all about,
To let Us know that Peace is come.

O, mild should be the Signs, and meek,
Sweet Peace's Advent to proclaim!
Silence her noiseless Foot should speak,
And Echo should repeat the same.

Lo! where the Soldier walks, alas!
With Scars received on foreign Grounds;
Shall we consume in colored Glass
The Oil that should be poured in Wounds?

The bleeding Gaps of War to close,
Will whizzing Rocket-Flight avail?
Will Squibs enliven Orphans' Woes?
Or Crackers cheer the Widow's Tale?

THE DEMON-SHIP.

'T WAS off the Wash — the sun went down — the sea looked black and grim,
For stormy clouds with murky fleece were mustering at the brim;
Titanic shades! enormous gloom! — as if the solid night
Of Erebus rose suddenly to seize upon the light!
It was a time for mariners to bear a wary eye,
With such a dark conspiracy between the sea and sky!

Down went my helm — close reefed — the tack held freely in my hand —
With ballast snug — I put about, and scudded for the land.
Loud hissed the sea beneath her lee; my little boat flew fast,
But faster still the rushing storm came borne upon the blast.
Lord! what a roaring hurricane beset the straining sail!
What furious sleet, with level drift, and fierce assaults of hail!
What darksome caverns yawned before! what jagged steeps behind!
Like battle-steeds, with foamy manes, wild tossing in the wind.
Each after each sank down astern, exhausted in the chase,
But where it sank another rose and galloped in its place:

As black as night — they turned to white, and cast against
the cloud
A snowy sheet, as if each surge upturned a sailor's shroud:
Still flew my boat; alas! alas! her course was nearly run!
Behold yon fatal billow rise — ten billows heaped in one!
With fearful speed the dreary mass came rolling, rolling fast,
As if the scooping sea contained one only wave, at last!
Still on it came, with horrid roar, a swift-pursuing grave;
It seemed as though some cloud had turned its hugeness to
a wave!
Its briny sleet began to beat beforehand in my face —
I felt the rearward keel begin to climb its swelling base!
I saw its Alpine hoary head impending over mine!
Another pulse, and down it rushed, an avalanche of brine!
Brief pause had I, on God to cry, or think of wife and home;
The waters closed — and when I shrieked, I shrieked below
the foam!
Beyond that rush I have no hint of any after deed —
For I was tossing on the waste, as senseless as a weed.

* * * * * *

"Where am I? in the breathing world, or in the world of
death?"
With sharp and sudden pang I drew another birth of breath;
My eyes drank in a doubtful light, my ears a doubtful sound,
And was that ship a *real* ship whose tackle seemed around?

A moon, as if the earthly moon, was shining up aloft;
But were those beams the very beams that I had seen so oft?
A face that mocked the human face before me watched alone;
But were those eyes the eyes of man that looked against
my own?

O! never may the moon again disclose me such a sight
As met my gaze, when first I looked on that accursed night!

I 've seen a thousand horrid shapes begot of fierce extremes
Of fever; and most frightful things have haunted in my dreams —
Hyenas, cats, blood-loving bats, and apes with hateful stare.
Pernicious snakes, and shaggy bulls, the lion and she-bear,
Strong enemies, with Judas looks, of treachery and spite —
Detested features, hardly dimmed and banished by the light!

Pale-sheeted ghosts, with gory locks, upstarting from their tombs —
All fantasies and images that flit in midnight glooms —
Hags, goblins, demons, lemures, have made me all aghast,—
But nothing like that GRIMLY ONE who stood beside the mast!

His cheek was black — his brow was black — his eyes and hair as dark:
His hand was black, and where it touched it left a sable mark;
His throat was black, his vest the same and when I looked beneath,
His breast was black — all, all was black, except his grinning teeth.
His sooty crew were like in hue, as black as Afric slaves!
O, horror! e'en the ship was black that ploughed the inky waves!

"Alas!" I cried, "for love of truth and blessed mercy's sake,
Where am I? in what dreadful ship? upon what dreadful lake?
What shape is that, so very grim, and black as any coal?
It is Mahound, the Evil One, and he has gained my soul!
O, mother dear! my tender nurse! dear meadows that beguiled
My happy days, when I was yet a little sinless child,—
My mother dear — my native fields, I never more shall see:
I 'm sailing in the Devil's Ship, upon the Devil's Sea!"

Loud laughed that SABLE MARINER, and loudly in return
His sooty crew sent forth a laugh that rang from stem to stern —
A dozen pair of grimly cheeks were crumpled on the nonce —
As many sets of grinning teeth came shining out at once:
A dozen gloomy shapes at once enjoyed the merry fit,
With shriek and yell, and oaths as well, like demons of the Pit.
They crowed their fill, and then the Chief made answer for the whole; —
"Our skins," said he, "are black, ye see, because we carry coal;
You 'll find your mother sure enough, and see your native fields —
For this here ship has picked you up — the Mary Ann of Shields!"

SPRING.

A NEW VERSION.

"*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly — it is very cold.
Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air."— HAMLET.

"COME, *gentle* Spring! ethereal *mildness*, come!"
O! Thomson, void of rhyme as well as reason,
How couldst thou thus poor human nature hum?
There 's no such season.

The Spring! I shrink and shudder at her name!
For why, I find her breath a bitter blighter!
And suffer from her *blows* as if they came
From Spring the Fighter.

Her praises, then, let hardy poets sing,
And be her tuneful laureates and upholders.
Who do not feel as if they had a *Spring*
Poured down their shoulders!

Let others eulogize her floral shows;
From me they cannot win a single stanza.
I know her blooms are in full blow — and so 's
The Influenza.

Her cowslips, stocks, and lilies of the vale,
Her honey-blossoms that you hear the bees at,
Her pansies, daffodils, and primrose pale,
Are things I sneeze at!

Fair is the vernal quarter of the year!
And fair its early buddings and its blowings —
But just suppose Consumption's seeds appear
With other sowings!

For me, I find, when eastern winds are high,
A frigid, not a genial inspiration;
Nor can, like Iron-Chested Chubb, defy
An inflammation.

Smitten by breezes from the land of plague,
To me all vernal luxuries are fables,
O! where 's the *Spring* in a rheumatic leg,
Stiff as a table's?

I limp in agony,— I wheeze and cough;
And quake with Ague, that great Agitator:
Nor dream, before July, of leaving off
My Respirator.

What wonder if in May itself I lack
A peg for laudatory verse to hang on? —
Spring mild and gentle! — yes, a Spring-heeled Jack
To those he sprang on.

In short, whatever panegyrics lie
In fulsome odes too many to be cited,
The tenderness of Spring is all my eye,
And that is blighted!

FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY.

A PATHETIC BALLAD.

BEN BATTLE was a soldier bold,
And used to war's alarms;
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
So he laid down his arms!

Now, as they bore him off the field,
Said he, "Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot!"

The army-surgeons made him limbs:
Said he, "They're only pegs:
But there's as wooden members quite
As represent my legs!"

Now, Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray;
So he went to pay her his devours,
When he devoured his pay!

But when he called on Nelly Gray,
She made him quite a scoff;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
Began to take them off!

"O, Nelly Gray! O, Nelly Gray
Is this your love so warm?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
Should be more uniform!"

Said she, "I loved a soldier once
For he was blithe and brave;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave!

"Before you had those timber toes,
Your love I did allow,
But then, you know, you stand upon
Another footing now!"

"O, Nelly Gray! O, Nelly Gray!
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call, I left my legs,
In Badajos's *breaches!*"

"Why then," said she, "you 've lost the feet
Of legs in war's alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms!"

"O, false and fickle Nelly Gray!
I know why you refuse: —
Though I 've no feet — some other man
Is standing in my shoes!

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face;
But, now, a long farewell!
For you will be my death; — alas
You will not be my *Nell!*"

Now, when he went from Nelly Gray,
His heart so heavy got,
And life was such a burthen grown,
It made him take a knot!

So round his melancholy neck
A rope he did entwine,
And, for his second time in life,
Enlisted in the Line!

One end he tied around a beam,
And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off, — of course,
He soon was off his legs!

And there he hung, till he was dead
As any nail in town,—
For, though distress had cut him up,
It could not cut him down!

A dozen men sat on his corpse,
To find out why he died —
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
With a *stake* in his inside!

THE FLOWER.

ALONE, across a foreign plain,
The exile slowly wanders,
And on his isle beyond the main
With saddened spirit ponders;

This lovely isle beyond the sea,
With all its household treasures,
Its cottage homes, its merry birds,
And all its rural pleasures;

Its leafy woods, its shady vales,
Its moors, and purple heather,
Its verdant fields bedecked with stars
His childhood loved to gather;

When, lo! he starts, with glad surprise,
Home-joys come rushing o'er him,
For "modest, wee, and crimson-tipped,"
He spies the flower before him!

With eager haste he stoops him down,
His eyes with moisture hazy,
And as he plucks the simple bloom
He murmurs, "Lawk-a-daisy!"

THE SEA-SPELL.

"*Cauld, cauld*, he lies beneath the deep."—*Old Scotch Ballad.*

It was a jolly mariner!
The tallest man of three,—
He loosed his sail against the wind,
And turned his boat to sea:
The ink-black sky told every eye
A storm was soon to be!

But still that jolly mariner
Took in no reef at all,
For, in his pouch, confidingly,
He wore a baby's caul;
A thing, as gossip-nurses know,
That always brings a squall!

His hat was new, or, newly glazed,
Shone brightly in the sun;
His jacket, like a mariner's,
True blue as e'er was spun:
His ample trousers, like St. Paul,
Bore forty stripes save one.

And now the fretting, foaming tide
He steered away to cross;
The bounding pinnace played a game
Of dreary pitch and toss;
A game that, on the good dry land,
Is apt to bring a loss!

Good Heaven befriend that little boat,
And guide her on her way!
A boat, they say, has canvas wings,
But cannot fly away!
Though, like a merry singing-bird,
She sits upon the spray!

Still south by east the little boat,
With tawny sail, kept beating:
Now out of sight, between two waves,
Now o'er the horizon fleeting;
Like greedy swine that feed on mast,—
The waves her mast seemed eating!

The sullen sky grew black above,
The wave as black beneath;
Each roaring billow showed full soon
A white and foamy wreath;
Like angry dogs that snarl at first,
And then display their teeth.

The boatman looked against the wind,
The mast began to creak,
The wave, per saltum, came and dried,
In salt, upon his cheek!
The pointed wave against him reared,
As if it owned a pique!

Nor rushing wind nor gushing wave
The boatman could alarm,
But still he stood away to sea,
And trusted in his charm;
He thought by purchase he was safe,
And armed against all harm!

Now thick and fast and far aslant
The stormy rain came pouring,
He heard, upon the sandy bank,
The distant breakers roaring,—
A groaning intermitting sound,
Like Gog and Magog snoring!

The sea-fowl shrieked around the mast,
Ahead the grampus tumbled,

And far off, from a copper cloud,
The hollow thunder rumbled;
It would have quailed another heart,
But his was never humbled.

For why? he had that infant's caul;
And wherefore should he dread?
Alas! alas! he little thought,
Before the ebb-tide sped,—
That, like that infant, he should die,
And with a watery head!

The rushing brine flowed in apace;
His boat had ne'er a deck:
Fate seemed to call him on, and he
Attended to her beck;
And so he went, still trusting on,
Though reckless — to his wreck!

For as he left his helm, to heave
The ballast-bags a-weather,
Three monstrous seas came roaring on,
Like lions leagued together.
The two first waves the little boat
Swam over like a feather,—

The two first waves were past and gone,
And sinking in her wake;
The hugest still came leaping on,
And hissing like a snake.
Now helm a-lee! for through the midst
The monster he must take!

Ah, me! it was a dreary mount!
Its base as black as night,
Its top of pale and livid green,
Its crest of awful white,

Like Neptune with a leprosy,—
And so it reared upright!

With quaking sails the little boat
Climbed up the foaming heap;
With quaking sails it paused a while,
At balance on the steep;
Then, rushing down the nether slope,
Plunged with a dizzy sweep!

Look, how a horse, made mad with fear,
Disdains his careful guide;
So now the headlong headstrong boat,
Unmanaged, turns aside,
And straight presents her reeling flank
Against the swelling tide!

The gusty wind assaults the sail;
Her ballast lies a-lee!
The sheet 's to windward taut and stiff,
O! the Lively — where is she?
Her capsized keel is in the foam,
Her pennon 's in the sea!

The wild gull, sailing overhead,
Three times beheld emerge
The head of that bold mariner,
And then she screamed his dirge!
For he had sunk within his grave,
Lapped in a shroud of surge!

The ensuing wave, with horrid foam,
Rushed o'er and covered all;
The jolly boatman's drowning scream
Was smothered by the squall,
Heaven never heard his cry, nor did
The ocean heed his *caul*.

A SAILOR'S APOLOGY FOR BOW-LEGS.

THERE 's some is born with their straight legs by natur —
And some is born with bow-legs from the first —
And some that should have growed a good deal straighter,
But they were badly nursed,
And set, you see, like Bacchus, with their pegs
Astride of casks and kegs :
I 've got myself a sort of bow to larboard,
And starboard,
And this is what it was that warped my legs.—

'T was all along of Poll, as I may say,
That fouled my cable when I ought to slip;
But on the tenth of May,
When I gets under weigh,
Down there in Hartfordshire, to join my ship,
I sees the mail
Get under sail,
The only one there was to make the trip.
Well — I gives chase,
But as she run
Two knots to one,
There warn't no use in keeping on the race!

Well — casting round about, what next to try on,
And how to spin,
I spies an ensign with a Bloody Lion,
And bears away to leeward for the inn,
Beats round the gable,
And fetches up before the coach-horse stable :
Well — there they stand, four kickers in a row.
And so
I just makes free to cut a brown 'un's cable.
But riding is n't in a seaman's natur —
So I whips out a toughish end of yarn,

And gets a kind of sort of a land-waiter
To splice me, heel to heel,
Under the she-mare's keel,
And off I goes, and leaves the inn a-starn.

My eyes! how she did pitch!
And would n't keep her own to go in no line,
Though I kept bowsing, bowsing at her bow-line,
But always making lee-way to the ditch,
And yawed her head about all sorts of ways.
The devil sink the craft!
And was n't she trimendous slack in stays!
We could n't, nohow, keep the inn abaft!
Well — I suppose
We had n't run a knot — or much beyond —
(What will you have on it?) — but off she goes,
Up to her bends in a fresh-water pond!
There I am! — all a-back!
So I looks forward for her bridle-gears,
To heave her head round on the t'other tack:
But when I starts,
The leather parts,
And goes away right over by the ears!

What could a fellow do,
Whose legs, like mine, you know, were in the bilboes
But trim myself upright for bringing-to,
And square his yard-arms, and brace up his elbows,
In rig all snug and clever,
Just while his craft was taking in her water?
I did n't like my berth, though, howsomedever,
Because the yarn, you see, kept getting tauter,—
Says I — I wish this job was rather shorter!

The chase had gained a mile
Ahead, and still the she-mare stood a-drinking:

Now, all the while
Her body did n't take of course to shrinking.
Says I, she 's letting out her reefs, I 'm thinking —
And so she swelled, and swelled,
And yet the tackle held,
Till both my legs began to bend like winkin.

My eyes ! but she took in enough to founder !
And there 's my timbers straining every bit,
Ready to split,
And her tarnation hull a-growing rounder !

Well, there — off Hartford Ness,
We lay both lashed and water-logged together,
And can't contrive a signal of distress ;
Thinks I, we must ride out this here foul weather,
Though sick of riding out — and nothing less ;
When, looking round, I sees a man a-starn : —
Hollo ! says I, come underneath her quarter ! —
And hands him out my knife to cut the yarn.
So I gets off, and lands upon the road,
And leaves the she-mare to her own consarn,
A-standing by the water.
If I get on another, I 'll be blowed ! —
And that 's the way, you see, my legs got bowed !

THE BACHELOR'S DREAM.

My pipe is lit, my grog is mixed,
My curtains drawn and all is snug :
Old Puss is in her elbow-chair,
And Tray is sitting on the rug.
Last night I had a curious dream,
Miss Susan Bates was Mistress Mogg —
What d' ye think of that, my cat ?
What d' ye think of that, my dog ?

She looked so fair, she sang so well,
I could but woo and she was won;
Myself in blue, the bride in white,
The ring was placed, the deed was done!
Away we went in chaise-and-four,
As fast as grinning boys could flog —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

What loving tête-à-têtes to come!
But tête-à-têtes must still defer!
When Susan came to live with me,
Her mother came to live with her!
With sister Belle she could n't part,
But all *my* ties had leave to jog —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

The mother brought a pretty Poll —
A monkey too, what work he made!
The sister introduced a beau —
My Susan brought a favorite maid.
She had a tabby of her own,—
A snappish mongrel christened Gog,—
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

The monkey bit — the parrot screamed,
All day the sister strummed and sung;
The petted maid was such a scold!
My Susan learned to use her tongue;
Her mother had such wretched health,
She sate and croaked like any frog —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

No longer Deary, Duck, and Love,
I soon came down to simple "M!"
The very servants crossed my wish,
My Susan let me down to them.
The poker hardly seemed my own,
I might as well have been a log —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

My clothes they were the queerest shape!
Such coats and hats she never met!
My ways they were the oddest ways!
My friends were such a vulgar set!
Poor Tompkinson was snubbed and huffed,
She could not bear that Mister Blogg —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog!

At times we had a spar, and then
Mamma must mingle in the song —
The sister took a sister's part —
The maid declared her master wrong —
The parrot learned to call me "Fool!"
My life was like a London fog —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

My Susan's taste was superfine,
As proved by bills that had no end;
I never had a decent coat —
I never had a coin to spend!
She forced me to resign my club,
Lay down my pipe, retrench my grog —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

Each Sunday night we gave a rout
To fops and flirts, a pretty list;
And when I tried to steal away,
I found my study full of whist!
Then, first to come, and last to go,
There always was a Captain Hogg —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

Now was not that an awful dream
For one who single is and snug —
With Pussy in the elbow-chair,
And Tray reposing on the rug? —
If I must totter down the hill,
'T is safest done without a clog —
What d' ye think of that, my cat?
What d' ye think of that, my dog?

THE WEE MAN.

A ROMANCE.

It was a merry company,
And they were just afloat,
When, lo! a man, of dwarfish span,
Came up and hailed the boat.

"Good-morrow to ye, gentle folks,
And will you let me in? —
A slender space will serve my case,
For I am small and thin."

They saw he was a dwarfish man,
And very small and thin;
Not seven such would matter much,
And so they took him in.

They laughed to see his little hat,
With such a narrow brim;
They laughed to note his dapper coat,
With skirts so scant and trim.

But barely had they gone a mile,
When, gravely, one and all
At once began to think the man
Was not so very small.

His coat had got a broader skirt,
His hat a broader brim,
His leg grew stout, and soon plumped out
A very proper limb.

Still on they went, and as they went
More rough the billows grew,—
And rose and fell, a greater swell,
And he was swelling too!

And, lo! where room had been for seven,
For six there scarce was space!
For five!—for four!—for three!—not more
Than two could find a place!

There was not even room for one!
They crowded by degrees—
Ay—closer yet, till elbows met,
And knees were jogging knees.

"Good sir, you must not sit astern,
The wave will else come in!"
Without a word he gravely stirred,
Another seat to win.

"Good sir, the boat has lost her trim,
You must not sit a-lee!"
With smiling face and courteous grace,
The middle seat took he.

But still, by constant quiet growth,
His back became so wide,
Each neighbor wight, to left and right,
Was thrust against the side.

Lord! how they chided with themselves,
That they had let him in!
To see him grow so monstrous now,
That came so small and thin.

On every brow a dew-drop stood,
They grew so scared and hot,—
"I' the name of all that 's great and tall.
Who are ye, sir, and what?"

Loud laughed the Gogmagog, a laugh
As loud as giant's roar —
"When first I came, my proper name
Was Little — now I 'm *Moore!*"

DEATH'S RAMBLE.

One day the dreary old King of Death
Inclined for some sport with the carnal,
So he tied a pack of darts on his back,
And quietly stole from his charnel.

His head was bald of flesh and of hair,
His body was lean and lank;
His joints at each stir made a crack, and the cur
Took a gnaw, by the way, at his shank.

And what did he do with his deadly darts,
This goblin of grisly bone?
He dabbled and spilled man's blood, and he killed
Like a butcher that kills his own.

The first he slaughtered it made him laugh,
(For the man was a coffin-maker,)
To think how the mutes, and men in black suits,
Would mourn for an undertaker.

Death saw two Quakers sitting at church;
Quoth he, "We shall not differ."
And he let them alone, like figures of stone,
For he could not make them stiffer.

He saw two duellists going to fight,
In fear they could not smother;
And he shot one through at once — for he knew
They never would shoot each other.

He saw a watchman fast in his box
And he gave a snore infernal;
Said Death, "He may keep his breath, for his sleep
Can never be more eternal."

He met a coachman driving a coach
So slow that his fare grew sick;
But he let him stray on his tedious way,
For Death only wars on the *quick*.

Death saw a tollman taking a toll,
In the spirit of his fraternity;
But he knew that sort of man would extort,
Though summoned to all eternity.

He found an author writing his life,
But he let him write no further;
For Death, who strikes whenever he likes,
Is jealous of all self-murther!

Death saw a patient that pulled out his purse,
And a doctor that took the sum;
But he let them be — for he knew that the "fee"
Was a prelude to "faw" and "fum."

He met a dustman ringing a bell,
And he gave him a mortal thrust;
For himself, by law, since Adam's flaw,
Is contractor for all our dust.

He saw a sailor mixing his grog,
And he marked him out for slaughter;
For on water he scarcely had cared for death,
And never on rum-and-water.

Death saw two players playing at cards,
But the game was n't worth a dump,
For he quickly laid them flat with a spade.
To wait for the final trump!

THE PROGRESS OF ART.

O HAPPY time! — Art's early days!
When o'er each deed, with sweet self-praise,
Narcissus-like I hung!
When great Rembrandt but little seemed,
And such Old Masters all were deemed
As nothing to the young!

Some scratchy strokes — abrupt and few,
So easily and swift I drew,
Sufficed for my design;
My sketchy, superficial hand,
Drew solids at a dash — and spanned
A surface with a line.

Not long my eye was thus content,
But grew more critical — my bent
Essayed a higher walk;
I copied leaden eyes in lead —
Rheumatic hands in white and red,
And gouty feet — in chalk.

Anon my studious art for days
Kept making faces — happy phrase,
For faces such as mine!
Accomplished in the details then,
I left the minor parts of men,
And drew the form divine.

Old gods and heroes — Trojan — Greek,
Figures — long after the antique,
Great Ajax justly feared;
Hectors, of whom at night I dreamt,
And Nestor, fringed enough to tempt
Bird-nesters to his beard.

A Bacchus, leering on a bowl,
A Pallas, that out-stared her owl,
A Vulcan — very lame;
A Dian stuck about with stars,
With my right hand I murdered Mars —
(One Williams did the same.)

But tired of this dry work at last,
Crayon and chalk aside I cast,
And gave my brush a drink.
Dipping — "as when a painter dips
In gloom of earthquake and eclipse,"—
That is — in Indian ink.

O then, what black Mont Blancs arose,
Crested with soot, and not with snows:
What clouds of dingy hue!
In spite of what the bard has penned,
I fear the distance did not "lend
Enchantment to the view."

Not Radclyffe's brush did e'er design
Black forests half so black as mine,

Or lakes so like a pall;
The Chinese cake dispersed a ray
Of darkness, like the light of Day
And Martin, over all.

Yet urchin pride sustained me still;
I gazed on all with right good will,
And spread the dingy tint;
"No holy Luke helped me to paint;
The Devil, surely not a Saint,
Had any finger in 't!"

But colors came! — like morning light,
With gorgeous hues displacing night,
Or Spring's enlivened scene:
At once the sable shades withdrew;
My skies got very, very blue;
My trees, extremely green.

And, washed by my cosmetic brush,
How Beauty's cheek began to blush!
With lock of auburn stain —
(Not Goldsmith's Auburn) — nut-brown hair,
That made her loveliest of the fair;
Not "loveliest of the plain!"

Her lips were of vermilion hue;
Love in her eyes, and Prussian blue,
Set all my heart in flame!
A young Pygmalion, I adored
The maids I made — but time was stored
With evil — and it came!

Perspective dawned — and soon I saw
My houses stand against its law;
And "keeping" all unkept!

My beauties were no longer things
For love and fond imaginings;
But horrors to be wept!

Ah! why did knowledge ope my eyes?
Why did I get more artist-wise?
It only serves to hint
What grave defects and wants are mine;
That I'm no Hilton in design—
In nature no Dewint!

Thrice happy time! — Art's early days!
When o'er each deed, with sweet self-praise,
Narcissus-like I hung!
When great Rembrandt but little seemed,
And such Old Masters all were deemed
As nothing to the young!

A FAIRY TALE.

On Hounslow heath — and close beside the road,
As western travellers may oft have seen,—
A little house some years ago there stood,
A minikin abode;
And built like Mr. Birkbeck's, all of wood;
The walls of white, the window-shutters green; —
Four wheels it had at North, South, East, and West,
(Though now at rest,)
On which it used to wander to and fro,
Because its master ne'er maintained a rider,
Like those who trade in Paternoster Row;
But made his business travel for itself,
Till he had made his pelf,
And then retired — if one may call it so.
Of a roadsider.

Perchance, the very race and constant riot
Of stages, long and short, which thereby ran,
Made him more relish the repose and quiet
Of his now sedentary caravan;
Perchance, he loved the ground because 't was common,
And so he might impale a strip of soil,
That furnished, by his toil,
Some dusty greens, for him and his old woman; —
And five tall hollyhocks, in dingy flower.
Howbeit, the thoroughfare did no ways spoil
His peace,— unless, in some unlucky hour,
A stray horse came and gobbled up his bower!

But, tired of always looking at the coaches,
The same to come,— when they had seen them one day!
And, used to brisker life, both man and wife
Began to suffer N U E's approaches,
And feel retirement like a long wet Sunday,—
So, having had some quarters of school-breeding,
They turned themselves, like other folks, to reading;
But setting out where others nigh have done,
And being ripened in the seventh stage,
The childhood of old age,
Began, as other children have begun,—
Not with the pastorals of Mr. Pope,
Or Bard of Hope,
Or Paley ethical, or learned Porson,—
But spelt, on Sabbaths, in St. Mark, or John,
And then relaxed themselves with Whittington,
Or Valentine and Orson —
But chiefly fairy tales they loved to con,
And being easily melted in their dotage,
Slobbered,— and kept
Reading,— and wept
Over the White Cat, in their wooden cottage.

Thus reading on — the longer
They read, of course, their childish faith grew stronger
In Gnomes, and Hags, and Elves, and Giants grim,—
If talking trees and birds revealed to him,
She saw the flight of Fairyland's fly-wagons,
And magic fishes swim
In puddle ponds, and took old crows for dragons,—
Both were quite drunk from the enchanted flagons;
When, as it fell upon a summer's day,
As the old man sat a feeding
On the old babe-reading,
Beside his open street-and-parlor door,
A hideous roar
Proclaimed a drove of beasts was coming by the way.

Long-horned, and short, of many a different breed,
Tall, tawny brutes, from famous Lincoln-levels,
Or Durham feed,
With some of those unquiet black dwarf devils,
From nether side of Tweed,
Or Firth of Forth;
Looking half wild with joy to leave the North,—
With dusty hides, all mobbing on together,—
When,— whether from a fly's malicious comment
Upon his tender flank, from which he shrank;
Or whether
Only in some enthusiastic moment,—
However, one brown monster, in a frisk,
Giving his tale a perpendicular whisk,
Kicked out a passage through the beastly rabble;
And after a pas seul,— or, if you will, a
Hornpipe before the basket-maker's villa,
Leapt o'er the tiny pale,—
Backed his beef-steaks against the wooden gable,
And thrust his brawny bell-rope of a tail

Right o'er the page
Wherein the sage
Just then was spelling some romantic fable.

The old man, half a scholar, half a dunce,
Could not peruse — who could? — two tales at once;
And being huffed
At what he knew was none of Riquet's Tuft,
Banged-to the door,
But most unluckily enclosed a morsel
Of the intruding tail, and all the tassel: —
The monster gave a roar,
And bolting off with speed, increased by pain,
The little house became a coach once more,
And, like Macheath, "took to the road" again!

Just then, by fortune's whimsical decree,
The ancient woman stooping with her crupper
Towards sweet home, or where sweet home should be
Was getting up some household herbs for supper:
Thoughtful of Cinderella, in the tale,
And quaintly wondering if magic shifts
Could o'er a common pumpkin so prevail,
To turn it to a coach,— what pretty gifts
Might come of cabbages, and curly kale:
Meanwhile she never heard her old man's wail,
Nor turned, till home had turned a corner, quite
Gone out of sight!

At last, conceive her, rising from the ground,
Weary of sitting on her russet clothing;
And looking round
Where rest was to be found,
There was no house — no villa there — no nothing!
No house!

The change was quite amazing;
It made her senses stagger for a minute,
The riddle's explication seemed to harden;
But soon her superannuated *nous*
Explained the horrid mystery; — and raising
Her hand to heaven, with the cabbage in it,
On which she meant to sup,—
"Well! this *is* Fairy Work! I'll bet a farden.
Little Prince Silverwings has ketched me up,
And set me down in some one else's garden!"

THE TURTLES.

A FABLE.

"The rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle."— BYRON.

ONE day, it was before a civic dinner,
Two London Aldermen, no matter which,—
Cordwainer, Girdler, Pattern-maker, Skinner,—
But both were florid, corpulent, and rich,
And both right fond of festive demolition,
Set forth upon a secret expedition.
Yet not, as might be fancied from the token,
To Pudding Lane, Pie Corner, or the Street
Of Bread, or Grub, or anything to eat,
Or drink, as Milk, or Vintry, or Portsoken,
But eastward to that more aquatic quarter,
Where folks take water,
Or, bound on voyages, secure a berth
For Antwerp or Ostend, Dundee or Perth,
Calais, Boulogne, or any port on earth!

Jostled and jostling, through the mud,
Peculiar to the town of Lud,
Down narrow streets and crooked lanes they dived,

Past many a gusty avenue, through which
Came yellow fog, and smell of pitch,
From barge, and boat, and dusky wharf derived;
With darker fumes, brought eddying by the draught,
From loco-smoko-motive craft;
Mingling with scents of butter, cheese, and gammons,
Tea, coffee, sugar, pickles, rosin, wax,
Hides, tallow, Russia-matting, hemp and flax
Salt-cod, red-herrings, sprats, and kippered salmons,
Nuts, oranges, and lemons,
Each pungent spice, and aromatic gum,
Gas, pepper, soaplees, brandy, gin, and rum;
Alamode-beef and greens — the London soil —
Glue, coal, tobacco, turpentine, and oil,
Bark, asafœtida, squills, vitriol, hops,
In short, all whiffs, and sniffs, and puffs, and snuffs,
From metals, minerals, and dyewood stuffs,
Fruits, victual, drink, solidities, or slops —
In flasks, casks, bales, trucks, wagons, taverns, shops
Boats, lighters, cellars, wharfs, and warehouse-tops,
That, as we walk upon the river's ridge,
Assault the nose — below the bridge.

A walk, however, as tradition tells,
That once a poor blind Tobit used to choose,
Because, incapable of other views,
He met with "such a sight of smells."

But on, and on, and on,
In spite of all unsavory shocks,
Progress the stout Sir Peter and Sir John,
Steadily steering ship-like for the docks —
And now they reach a place the Muse, unwilling,
Recalls for female slang and vulgar doing,
The famous Gate of Billing
That does not lead to cooing —

And now they pass that house that is so ugly
A customer to people looking smuggl'y —
And now along that fatal hill they pass
Where centuries ago an Oxford bled,
And proved — too late to save his life, alas ! —
That *he* was "off his head."

At last before a lofty brick-built pile
Sir Peter stopped, and with mysterious smile
Tinkled a bell that served to bring
The wire-drawn genius of the ring,
A species of commercial Samuel Weller —
To whom Sir Peter, tipping him a wink,
And something else to drink,
"Show us the cellar."

Obsequious bowed the man, and led the way
Down sundry flights of stairs, where windows small,
Dappled with mud, let in a dingy ray —
A dirty tax, if they were taxed at all.
At length they came into a cellar damp,
With venerable cobwebs fringed around,
A cellar of that stamp
Which often harbors vintages renowned,
The feudal Hock, or Burgundy the courtly,
With sherry, brown or golden,
Or port, so olden,
Bereft of body 't is no longer portly —
But old or otherwise — to be veracious —
That cobwebbed cellar, damp, and dim, and spacious
Held nothing crusty — but crustaceous.

Prone on the chilly floor,
Five splendid turtles — such a five !
Natives of some West Indian shore,
Were flapping all alive,

Late landed from the Jolly Planter's yawl —
A sight whereon the dignitaries fixed
Their eager eyes, with ecstasy unmixed,
Like fathers that behold their infants crawl,
Enjoying every little kick and sprawl.
Nay — far from fatherly the thoughts they bred,
Poor loggerheads from far Ascension ferried!
The Aldermen too plainly wished them dead
And Aldermanbury'd!
"There!" cried Sir Peter, with an air
Triumphant as an ancient victor's,
And pointing to the creatures rich and rare,
"There 's picters!

"Talk of Olympic Games! They're not worth mention;
The real prize for wrestling is when Jack,
In Providence or Ascension,
Can throw a lively turtle on its back!"

"Ay!" cried Sir John, and with a score of nods,
Thoughtful of classical symposium,
"There 's food for gods!
There 's nectar! there 's ambrosium!
There 's food for Roman emperors to eat —
O, there had been a treat
(Those ancient names will sometimes hobble us)
For Helio-gobble-us!

"There were a feast for Alexander's Feast!
The real sort — none of your mock or spurious!"
And then he mentioned Aldermen deceased,
And "Epicurius,"
And how Tertullian had enjoyed such foison:
And speculated on that *verdigrease*
That is n't poison.

"Talk of your Spring, and verdure, and all that!
Give *me* green fat!
As for your poets with their groves of myrtles
And billing turtles,
Give me, for poetry, them Turtles there,
A-billing in a bill of fare!

"Of all the things I ever swallow —
Good, well-dressed turtle beats them hollow;
It almost makes me wish, I vow,
To have *two* stomachs, like a cow!"
And, lo! as with the cud, an inward thrill
Upheaved his waistcoat and disturbed his frill,
His mouth was oozing and he worked his jaw
"I almost think that I could eat one raw!"

And thus, as "inward love breeds outward talk,"
The portly pair continued to discourse;
And then — as Gray describes of life's divorce —
With "longing, lingering look" prepared to walk,—
Having through one delighted sense, at least,
Enjoyed a sort of Barmecidal feast,
And with prophetic gestures, strange to see,
Forestalled the civic banquet yet to be,
Its callipash and callipee!

A pleasant prospect — but, alack!
Scarcely each Alderman had turned his back,
When, seizing on the moment so propitious,
And having learned that they were so delicious
To bite and sup,
From praises so high flown and injudicious,—
And nothing could be more pernicious!
The Turtles fell to work, and ate each other up!

Moral.

Never, from folly or urbanity,
Praise people thus profusely to their faces,
Till, quite in love with their own graces,
They 're eaten up by vanity!

THE DESERT-BORN.

"Fly to the desert, fly with me."—LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

'T WAS in the wilds of Lebanon, amongst its barren hills,—
To think upon it, even now, my very blood it chills!—
My sketch-book spread before me, and my pencil in my hand,
I gazed upon the mountain range, the red tumultuous sand,
The plumy palms, the sombre firs, the cedars tall and proud,
When, lo! a shadow passed across the paper like a cloud,
And looking up I saw a form, apt figure for the scene,
Methought I stood in presence of some oriental queen!

The turban on her head was white as any driven snow;
A purple bandalette passed o'er the lofty brow below,
And thence upon her shoulders fell, by either jewelled ear;
In yellow folds voluminous she wore her long cachemere;
Whilst underneath, with ample sleeves, a Turkish robe of silk
Enveloped her in drapery the color of new milk;
Yet oft it floated wide in front, disclosing underneath
A gorgeous Persian tunic, rich with many a broidered wreath,
Compelled by clasps of costly pearl around her neck to meet,
And yellow as the amber were the buskins on her feet!

Of course I bowed my lowest bow; of all the things on earth,
The reverence due to loveliness, to rank, or ancient birth,
To power, to wealth, to genius, or to any thing uncommon,
A man should bend the lowest in a *Desert* to a *Woman!*

Yet some strange influence stronger still, though vague and
undefined,
Compelled me, and with magic might subdued my soul and
mind;
There was a something in her air that drew the spirit nigh,
Beyond the common witchery that dwells in woman's eye!
With reverence deep, like any slave of that peculiar land,
I bowed my forehead to the earth, and kissed the arid sand;
And then I touched her garment's hem, devoutly as a Dervise,
Predestinated (so I felt) forever to her service.

Nor was I wrong in auguring thus my fortune from her face;
She knew me, seemingly, as well as any of her race;
"Welcome!" she cried, as I uprose submissive to my feet;
"It was ordained that you and I should in this desert meet!
Ay, ages since, before thy soul had burst its prison-bars,
This interview was promised in the language of the stars!"
Then clapping, as the Easterns wont, her all-commanding
hands,
A score of mounted Arabs came fast spurring o'er the sands,
Nor reined they up their foaming steeds till in my very face
They blew the breath impetuous, and panting from the race.

"Fear naught," exclaimed the radiant one, as I sprang off
aloof;
"Thy precious frame need never fear a blow from horse's hoof!
Thy natal star was fortunate as any orb of birth,
And fate hath held in store for thee the rarest gift of earth."
Then turning to the dusky men, that humbly waited near,
She cried, "Go bring the BEAUTIFUL — for, lo! the MAN is
here!"

Off went the obsequious train as swift as Arab hoofs could flee,
But Fancy fond outraced them all, with bridle loose and
free.

And brought me back, for love's attack, some fair Circassian
bride,
Or Georgian girl, the Harem's boast, and fit for Sultan's side;
Methought I lifted up her veil, and saw dark eyes beneath,
Mild as gazelle's, a snowy brow, ripe lips, and pearly teeth,
A swanlike neck, a shoulder round, full bosom, and a waist
Not too compact, and rounded limbs, to oriental taste.

Methought—but here, alas! alas! the airy dream to blight,
Behold the Arabs leading up a Mare of milky white!
To tell the truth, without reserve, evasion, or remorse,
The last of creatures in my love or liking is a horse;
Whether in early youth some kick untimely laid me flat,
Whether from born antipathy, as some dislike a cat,
I never yet could bear the kind, from Meux's giant steeds
Down to those little bearish cubs of Shetland's shaggy breeds;
As for a war-horse, he that can bestride one *is* a hero,—
Merely to look at such a sight my courage sinks to zero.
With lightning eyes, and thunder mane, and hurricanes of
legs,
Tempestuous tail—to picture him description vainly begs!
His fiery nostrils send forth clouds of smoke instead of breath;
Nay, was it not a horse that bore the grisly shape of Death?
Judge then how cold an ague-fit of agony was mine
To see the mistress of my fate, imperious, make a sign
To which my own foreboding soul the cruel sense supplied:
"Mount, happy man, and *run away* with your Arabian
bride!"
Grim was the smile, and tremulous the voice with which I
spoke,
Like any one's when jesting with a subject not a joke,
So men have trifled with the axe before the fatal stroke.

"Lady, if mine had been the luck in Yorkshire to be born
Or any of its *ridings*, this would be a blessed morn;

But, hapless one! I cannot ride; there's something in a horse
That I can always honor, but I never could endorse;
To speak still more commercially, in riding I am quite
Averse to running long, and apt to be paid off at sight:
In legal phrase, for every class to understand me still,
I never was in stirrups yet a tenant but at will;
Or, if you please, in artist terms, I never went a-straddle
On any horse without 'a want of keeping' in the saddle.
In short," and here I blushed, abashed, and held my head
full low,
"I'm one of those whose infant ears have heard the chimes
of Bow!"

The lady smiled, as houris smile, adown from Turkish skies,
And beams of cruel kindness shone within her hazel eyes;
"Stranger," she said, "or rather say, my nearest, dearest
friend,
There's something in your eyes, your air, and that high
instep's bend,
That tells me you 're of Arab race,—whatever spot of earth,
Cheapside, or Bow, or Stepney, had the honor of your birth,
The East it is your country! Like an infant changed at
nurse
By fairies, you have undergone a nurtureship perverse;
But this—these desert sands—these palms, and cedars
waving wild,
All, all, adopt thee as their own—an oriental child;—
The cloud may hide the sun a while, but soon or late, no doubt,
The spirit of your ancestry will burst and sparkle out!
I read the starry characters—and, lo! 'tis written there,
Thou wert foredoomed of sons of men to ride upon this Mare,
A Mare till now was never backed by one of mortal mould;
Hark! how she neighs, as if for thee she knew that she was
foaled!"

And truly — I devoutly wished a blast of the simoom
Had stifled her! — the mare herself appeared to mock my doom;
With many a bound she capered round and round me like a dance;
I feared indeed some wild caress would end the fearful prance,
And felt myself, and saw myself — the fantasy was horrid!
Like old Redgauntlet, with a shoe imprinted on my forehead!
On bended knees, with bowing head, and hands upraised in prayer,
I begged the turbaned Sultaness the issue to forbear;
I painted weeping orphan babes, around a widowed wife,
And drew my death as vividly as others draw from life;
"Behold," I said, "a simple man, for such high feats unfit,
Who never yet has learned to know the crupper from the bit,
Whereas the boldest horsemanship, and first equestrian skill,
Would well be tasked to bend so wild a creature to the will."
Alas! alas! 't was all in vain, to supplicate and kneel,
The quadruped could not have been more cold to my appeal!

"Fear nothing," said the smiling Fate, "when human help is vain,
Spirits shall by thy stirrups fly, and fairies guide the rein;
Just glance at yonder animal, her perfect shape remark,
And in thy breast at once shall glow the oriental spark!
As for thy spouse and tender babes, no Arab roams the wild
But for a Mare of such descent would barter wife and child."

'Nay, then," cried I — (Heaven shrive the lie!) "to tell the secret truth,
'T was my unhappy fortune once to over-ride a youth!
A playful child, — so full of life! — a little fair-haired boy,
His sister's pet, his father's hope, his mother's darling joy!
Ah me! the frantic shriek she gave! I hear it ringing now!
That hour, upon the bloody spot, I made a holy vow;

A solemn compact, deeply sworn, to witness my remorse,
That never more these limbs of mine should mount on living
horse!"
Good Heaven! to see the angry glance that flashed upon
me now!
A chill ran all my marrow through — the drops were on my
brow!
I knew my doom, and stole a glance at that accursed Mare,
And there she stood, with nostrils wide, that snuffed the
sultry air.
How lion-like she lashed her flanks with her abundant tail;
While on her neck the stormy mane kept tossing to the gale!
How fearfully she rolled her eyes between the earth and sky,
As if in wild uncertainty to gallop or to fly!
While with her hoof she scooped the sand as if before she gave
My plunge into eternity she meant to dig my grave!

And I, that ne'er could calmly bear a horse's ears at play —
Or hear without a yard of jump his shrill and sudden neigh —
Whose foot within a stable-door had never stood an inch —
Whose hand to pat a living steed would feel an awful flinch, —
I, that had never thrown a leg across a pony small,
To scour the pathless desert on the tallest of the tall!
For, O! it is no fable, but at every look I cast,
Her restless legs seemed twice as long as when I saw them last!

In agony I shook — and yet, although congealed by fears,
My blood was boiling fast, to judge from noises in my ears;
I gasped as if in vacuo, and, thrilling with despair,
Some secret demon seemed to pass his fingers through my hair.
I could not stir — I could not speak — I could not even see —
A sudden mist rose up between that awful Mare and me, —
I tried to pray, but found no words, though ready ripe to weep
No tear would flow, o'er every sense a swoon began to creep

When, lo! to bring my horrid fate at once unto the brunt,
Two Arabs seized me from behind, two others in the front,
And ere a muscle could be strung to try the strife forlorn
I found myself, Mazeppa-like, upon the Desert-Born!

Terrific was the neigh she gave, the moment that my weight
Was felt upon her back, as if exulting in her freight;
Whilst dolefully I heard a voice that set each nerve ajar,—
"Off with the bridle — quick! — and leave his guidance to his star!"

"Allah! il Allah!" rose the shout, and starting with a bound,
The dreadful Creature cleared at once a dozen yards of ground;
And grasping at her mane with both my cold convulsive hands,
Away we flew — away! away! across the shifting sands!
My eyes were closed in utter dread of such a fearful race,
But yet by certain signs I knew we went no earthly pace,
For turn whichever way we might, the wind with equal force
Rushed like a torrid hurricane still adverse to our course —
One moment close at hand I heard the roaring Syrian Sea,
The next it only murmured like the humming of a bee!
And when I dared at last to glance across the wild immense,
O, ne'er shall I forget the whirl that met the dizzy sense!
What seemed a little sprig of fern, ere lips could reckon twain,
A palm of forty cubits high, we passed it on the plain!
What tongue could tell,— what pencil paint,— what pen describe the ride?
Now off — now on — now up — now down,— and flung from side to side!
I tried to speak, but had no voice, to soothe her with its tone;
My scanty breath was jolted out with many a sudden groan,

My joints were racked — my back was strained, so firmly I had clung —
My nostrils gushed, and thrice my teeth had bitten through my tongue —
When, lo! — farewell all hope of life! — she turned and faced the rocks, —
None but a flying horse could clear those monstrous granite blocks!
So thought I, — but I little knew the desert pride and fire,
Derived from a most deer-like dam, and lion-hearted sire;
Little I guessed the energy of muscle, blood and bone;
Bound after bound, with eager springs, she cleared each massive stone; —
Nine mortal leaps were passed before a huge gray rock at length
Stood planted there as if to dare her utmost pitch of strength;
My time was come! that granite heap my monument of death!
She paused, she snorted loud and long, and drew a fuller breath;
Nine strides, and then a louder beat that warned me of her spring,
I felt her rising in the air like eagle on the wing —
But, O! the crash! — the hideous shock! — the million sparks around!
Her hindmost hoofs had struck the crest of that prodigious mound!
Wild shricked the headlong Desert-Born — or else 't was demons' mirth,
One second more, and Man and Mare rolled breathless on the earth!

* * * * * *

How long it was I cannot tell ere I revived to sense
And then but to endure the pangs of agony intense:

For over me lay powerless, and still as any stone,
The Corse that erst had so much fire, strength, spirit of its own
My heart was still — my pulses stopped — midway 'twixt life and death,
With pain unspeakable I fetched the fragment of a breath,
Not vital air enough to frame one short and feeble sigh,
Yet even that I loathed because it would not let me die.
O ! slowly, slowly, slowly on, from starry night till morn,
Time flapped along, with leaden wings, across that waste forlorn,
I cursed the hour that brought me first within this world of strife —
A sore and heavy sin it is to scorn the gift of life —
But who hath felt a horse's weight oppress his laboring breast?
Why, any who has had, like me, the NIGHT MARE on his chest.

LOVE LANE.

IF I should love a maiden more,
And woo her every hope to crown,
I 'd love her all the country o'er,
But not declare it out of town.

One even, by a mossy bank,
That held a hornet's nest within,
To Ellen on my knees I sank,—
How snakes will twine around the shin !

A bashful fear my soul unnerved,
And gave my heart a backward tug;
Nor was I cheered when she observed,
Whilst I was silent, "What a slug !"

At length my offer I preferred,
And Hope a kind reply forebode —

Alas! the only sound I heard
Was, "What a horrid ugly toad!"

I vowed to give her all my heart,
To love her till my life took leave,
And painted all a lover's smart —
Except a wasp gone up his sleeve!

But when I ventured to abide
Her father's and her mother's grants —
Sudden she started up and cried,
"O dear! I am all over ants!"

Nay, when beginning to beseech
The cause that led to my rebuff,
The answer was as strange a speech —
A "Daddy-Longlegs, sure enough!"

I spoke of fortune — house,— and lands,
And still renewed the warm attack,—
'T is vain to offer ladies hands
That have a spider on the back!

'T is vain to talk of hopes and fears,
And hope the least reply to win,
From any maid that stops her ears
In dread of earwigs creeping in!

'T is vain to call the dearest names
Whilst stoats and weasels startle by —
As vain to talk of mutual flames
To one with glowworms in her eye!

What checked me in my fond address,
And knocked each pretty image down?
What stopped my Ellen's faltering yes?
A caterpillar on her gown!

To list to Philomel is sweet —
To see the moon rise silver-pale,—

But not to kneel at lady's feet
And crush a rival in a snail!

Sweet is the eventide, and kind
Its zephyr, balmy as the south;
But sweeter still to speak your mind
Without a chafer in your mouth!

At last, emboldened by my bliss,
Still fickle Fortune played me foul,
For when I strove to snatch a kiss
She screamed — by proxy, through an owl!

Then, lovers, doomed to life or death,
Shun moonlight, twilight, lanes and bats,
Lest you should have in self-same breath
To bless your fate — and curse the gnats!

DOMESTIC POEMS.

"It 's hame, hame, hame." — A. CUNNINGHAM.
"There 's no place like home." — CLARE.

I.

HYMENEAL RETROSPECTIONS.

O KATE! my dear partner, through joy and through strife!
When I look back at Hymen's dear day,
Not a lovelier bride ever changed to a wife,
Though you 're now so old, wizened, and gray!

Those eyes, then, were stars, shining rulers of fate!
But as liquid as stars in a pool;
Though now they're so dim, they appear, my dear Kate,
Just like gooseberries boiled for a fool!

That brow was like marble, so smooth and so fair;
Though it 's wrinkled so crookedly now,

As if Time, when those furrows were made by the share,
Had been tipsy whilst driving his plough!

Your nose, it was such as the sculptors all chose,
When a Venus demanded their skill;
Though now it can hardly be reckoned a nose,
But a sort of Poll-Parroty bill!

Your mouth, it was then quite a bait for the bees,
Such a nectar there hung on each lip;
Though now it has taken that lemon-like squeeze,
Not a blue-bottle comes for a sip!

Your chin, it was one of Love's favorite haunts,
From its dimple he could not get loose;
Though now the neat hand of a barber it wants,
Or a singe, like the breast of a goose!

How rich were those locks, so abundant and full,
With their ringlets of auburn so deep!
Though now they look only like frizzles of wool,
By a bramble torn off from a sheep!

That neck, not a swan could excel it in grace,
While in whiteness it vied with your arms
Though now a grave 'kerchief you properly place,
To conceal that scrag-end of your charms!

Your figure was tall, then, and perfectly straight,
Though it now has two twists from upright —
But bless you! still bless you! my partner! my Kate
Though you be such a perfect old fright!

II.

THE sun was slumbering in the west, my daily labors past
On Anna's soft and gentle breast my head reclined at last;

The darkness closed around, so dear to fond congenial souls;
And thus she murmured at my ear, "My love, we 're out of coals!

"That Mister Bond has called again, insisting on his rent;
And all the Todds are coming up to see us, out of Kent;
I quite forgot to tell you John has had a tipsy fall; —
I 'm sure there 's something going on with that vile Mary Hall!

"Miss Bell has bought the sweetest silk, and I have bought the rest —
Of course, if we go out of town, Southend will be the best.
I really think the Jones's house would be the thing for us;
I think I told you Mrs. Pope had parted with her *nus* —

"Cook, by the way, came up to-day, to bid me suit myself—
And, what d' ye think? the rats have gnawed the victuals on the shelf.
And, Lord! there 's such a letter come, inviting you to fight!
Of course you don't intend to go — God bless you, dear, good-night!"

III.

A PARENTAL ODE TO MY SON, AGED THREE YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS.

Thou happy, happy elf!
(But stop,— first let me kiss away that tear)
Thou tiny image of myself!
(My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)
Thou merry, laughing sprite!
With spirits feather-light,
Untouched by sorrow, and unsoiled by sin —
(Good heavens! the child is swallowing a pin!)

Thou little tricksy Puck!
With antic toys so funnily bestuck,
Light as the singing bird that wings the air —
(The door! the door! he 'll tumble down the stair!)
Thou darling of thy sire!
(Why, Jane, he 'll set his pinafore afire!)
Thou imp of mirth and joy!
In Love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,
Thou idol of thy parents — (Drat the boy!
There goes my ink!)

Thou cherub — but of earth;
Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,
In harmless sport and mirth,
(That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail!)
Thou human humming-bee, extracting honey
From every blossom in the world that blows,
Singing in youth's elysium ever sunny,
(Another tumble! — that 's his precious nose!)

Thy father's pride and hope!
(He 'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope!)
With pure heart newly stamped from Nature's mint —
(Where *did* he learn that squint?)
Thou young domestic dove!
(He 'll have that jug off, with another shove!)
Dear nursling of the Hymeneal nest!
(Are those torn clothes his best?)
Little epitome of man!
(He 'll climb upon the table, that 's his plan!)
Touched with the beauteous tints of dawning life —
(He 's got a knife!)

Thou enviable being!
No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky foreseeing,

Play on, play on,
My elfin John!
Toss the light ball — bestride the stick —
(I knew so many cakes would make him sick!)
With fancies, buoyant as the thistle-down,
Prompting the face grotesque, and antic brisk,
With many a lamb-like frisk,
(He 's got the scissors, snipping at your gown!)
Thou pretty opening rose!
(Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose!)
Balmy and breathing music like the South,
(He really brings my heart into my mouth!)
Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,—
(I wish that window had an iron bar!)
Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove,—
(I 'll tell you what, my love,
I cannot write, unless he 's sent above!)

IV.

A SERENADE.

"LULLABY, O, lullaby!"
Thus I heard a father cry,
"Lullaby, O, lullaby!
The brat will never shut an eye;
Hither come, some power divine!
Close his lids, or open mine!"

"Lullaby, O, lullaby!
What the devil makes him cry?
Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Still he stares — I wonder why,
Why are not the sons of earth
Blind, like puppies, from the birth?"

"Lullaby, O, lullaby!"
Thus I heard the father cry;
"Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Mary, you must come and try!—
Hush, O, hush, for mercy's sake—
The more I sing, the more you wake!"

"Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Fie, you little creature, fie!
Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Is no poppy-syrup nigh?
Give him some, or give him all,
I am nodding to his fall!"

"Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Two such nights and I shall die!
Lullaby, O, lullaby!
He 'll be bruised, and so shall I,—
How can I from bed-posts keep,
When I 'm walking in my sleep!"

"Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Sleep his very looks deny—
Lullaby, O, lullaby!
Nature soon will stupefy—
My nerves relax,—my eyes grow dim—
Who 's that fallen—me or him?"

A PLAIN DIRECTION.

"Do you never deviate?"—John Bull.

In London once I lost my way in faring to and fro,
And asked a little ragged boy the way that I should go;
He gave a nod, and then a wink, and told me to get there
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I boxed his little saucy ears, and then away I strode;
But since I've found that weary path is quite a common road.
Utopia is a pleasant place, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I've read about a famous town that drove a famous trade,
Where Whittington walked up and found a fortune ready made.
The very streets are paved with gold; but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I've read about a Fairy Land, in some romantic tale,
Where dwarfs if good are sure to thrive and wicked giants fail;
My wish is great, my shoes are strong, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I've heard about some happy isle, where every man is free,
And none can lie in bonds for life for want of L. S. D.
O! that's the land of Liberty! but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I've dreamt about some blessed spot, beneath the blessed sky,
Where bread and justice never rise too dear for folks to buy.
It's cheaper than the Ward of Cheap, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

They say there is an ancient house, as pure as it is old,
Where members always speak their minds, and votes are never sold.
I'm fond of all antiquities, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

They say there is a royal court maintained in noble state,
Where every able man, and good, is certain to be great!
I'm very fond of seeing sights, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

They say there is a temple too, where Christians come to pray;
But canting knaves and hypocrites and bigots keep away.
O! that 's the parish church for me! but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

They say there is a garden fair, that 's haunted by the dove,
Where love of gold doth ne'er eclipse the golden light of love;
The place must be a Paradise, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I 've heard there is a famous land for public spirit known —
Whose patriots love its interests much better than their own.
The Land of Promise sure it is! but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I 've read about a fine estate, a mansion large and strong;
A view all over Kent and back, and going for a song.
George Robins knows the very spot, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I 've heard there is a company all formal and enrolled,
Will take your smallest silver coin and give it back in gold.
Of course the office-door is mobbed, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

I 've heard about a pleasant land, where omelettes grow on trees,
And roasted pigs run crying out, "Come eat me, if you please."
My appetite is rather keen, but how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane, and all round the Square."

EQUESTRIAN COURTSHIP.

It was a young maiden went forth to ride,
And there was a wooer to pace by her side;
His horse was so little, and hers so high,
He thought his angel was up in the sky.

His love was great, though his wit was small;
He bade her ride easy — and that was all.
The very horses began to neigh,—
Because their betters had naught to say.

They rode by elm, and they rode by oak,
They rode by a church-yard, and then he spoke: —
"My pretty maiden, if you 'll agree
You shall always ramble through life with me."

The damsel answered him never a word,
But kicked the gray mare, and away she spurred.
The wooer still followed behind the jade,
And enjoyed — like a wooer — the dust she made.

They rode through moss, and they rode through moor. —
The gallant behind and the lass before; —
At last they came to a miry place,
And there the sad wooer gave up the chase.

Quoth he, "If my nag were better to ride,
I 'd follow her over the world so wide.
O, it is not my love that begins to fail,
But I 've lost the last glimpse of the gray mare's tail!"

AN OPEN QUESTION.

"It is the king's highway that we are in, and in this way it is that thou hast placed the lions."— BUNYAN.

WHAT! shut the Gardens! lock the latticed gate!
Refuse the shilling and the fellow's ticket!
And hang a wooden notice up to state,
"On Sundays no admittance at this wicket!"
The Birds, the Beasts, and all the Reptile race.
Denied to friends and visitors till Monday!
Now, really, this appears the common case

Of putting too much Sabbath into Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs Grundy?

The Gardens,— so unlike the ones we dub
Of Tea, wherein the artisan carouses,—
Mere shrubberies without one drop of shrub,—
Wherefore should they be closed like public-houses?
No ale is vended at the wild Deer's Head,—
No rum — nor gin — not even of a Monday —
The Lion is not carved — or gilt — or red,
And does not send out porter of a Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

The Bear denied! the Leopard under locks!
As if his spots would give contagious fevers!
The Beaver close as hat within its box;
So different from other Sunday beavers!
The Birds invisible — the Gnaw-way Rats —
The Seal hermetically sealed till Monday —
The Monkey tribe — the Family of Cats,—
We visit other families on Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

What is the brute profanity that shocks
The super-sensitively serious feeling?
The Kangaroo — is he not orthodox
To bend his legs, the way he does, in kneeling!
Was strict Sir Andrew, in his Sabbath coat,
Struck all a-heap to see a *Coati mundi?*
Or did the Kentish Plumtree faint to note
The Pelicans presenting bills on Sunday? —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

What feature has repulsed the serious set?
What error in the bestial birth or breeding,
To put their tender fancies on the fret?
One thing is plain — it is not in the feeding!

Some stiffish people think that smoking joints
Are carnal sins 'twixt Saturday and Monday —
But then the beasts are pious on these points,
For they all eat cold dinners on a Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

What change comes o'er the spirit of the place,
As if transmuted by some spell organic?
Turns fell Hyena of the Ghoulish race?
The Snake, *pro tempore*, the true Satanic?
Do Irish minds,— (whose theory allows
That now and then Good Friday falls on Monday) —
Do Irish minds suppose that Indian Cows
Are wicked Bulls of Bashan on a Sunday? —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

There are some moody Fellows, not a few,
Who, turned by Nature with a gloomy bias,
Renounce black devils to adopt the blue,
And think when they are dismal they are pious:
Is 't possible that Pug's untimely fun
Has sent the brutes to Coventry till Monday —
Or perhaps some animal, no serious one,
Was overheard in laughter on a Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

What dire offence have serious Fellows found
To raise their spleen against the Regent's spinney?
Were charitable boxes handed round,
And would not Guinea Pigs subscribe their guinea?
Perchance, the Demoiselle refused to moult
The feathers in her head — at least till Monday;
Or did the Elephant, unseemly, bolt
A tract presented to be read on Sunday? —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

At whom did Leo struggle to get loose?
  Who mourns through Monkey tricks his damaged clothing?
Who has been hissed by the Canadian Goose?
  On whom did Llama spit in utter loathing?
Some Smithfield Saint did jealous feelings tell
  To keep the Puma out of sight till Monday,
Because he preyed extempore as well
  As certain wild Itinerants on Sunday —
  But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

To me it seems that in the oddest way
  (Begging the pardon of each rigid Socius)
Our would-be Keepers of the Sabbath-day
  Are like the Keepers of the brutes ferocious —
As soon the Tiger might expect to stalk
  About the grounds from Saturday till Monday,
As any harmless man to take a walk,
  If Saints could clap him in a cage on Sunday —
  But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

In spite of all hypocrisy can spin,
  As surely as I am a Christian scion,
I cannot think it is a mortal sin —
  (Unless he 's loose) — to look upon a lion.
I really think that one may go, perchance,
  To see a bear, as guiltless as on Monday —
(That is, provided that he did not dance) —
  Bruin 's no worse than bakin' on a Sunday —
  But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

In spite of all the fanatic compiles,
  I cannot think the day a bit diviner,
Because no children, with forestalling smiles,
  Throng, happy, to the gates of Eden Minor —
It is not plain, to my poor faith at least,
  That what we christen "Natural" on Monday,

The wondrous history of Bird and Beast,
Can be unnatural because it 's Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

Whereon is sinful fantasy to work?
The Dove, the winged Columbus of man's haven?
The tender Love-Bird — or the filial Stork?
The punctual Crane — the providential Raven?
The Pelican whose bosom feeds her young?
Nay, must we cut from Saturday till Monday
That feathered marvel with a human tongue,
Because she does not preach upon a Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

The busy Beaver — that sagacious beast!
The Sheep that owned an Oriental Shepherd —
That Desert-ship, the Camel of the East,
The horned Rhinoceros — the spotted Leopard —
The Creatures of the Great Creator's hand
Are surely sights for better days than Monday —
The Elephant, although he wears no band,
Has he no sermon in his trunk for Sunday? —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

What harm if men who burn the midnight-oil,
Weary of frame, and worn and wan of feature,
Seek once a week their spirits to assoil,
And snatch a glimpse of "Animated Nature"?
Better it were if, in his best of suits,
The artisan, who goes to work on Monday,
Should spend a leisure-hour amongst the brutes,
Than make a beast of his own self on Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

Why, zounds! what raised so Protestant a fuss
(Omit the zounds! for which I make apology)

But that the Papists, like some Fellows, thus
Had somehow mixed up *Dens* with their **Theology**?
Is Brahma's Bull — a Hindoo god at home —
A Papal Bull to be tied up till Monday —
Or Leo, like his namesake, Pope of Rome,
That there is such a dread of them on **Sunday** —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

Spirit of Kant! have we not had enough
To make Religion sad, and sour, and **snubbish**,
But Saints Zoological must cant their stuff,
As vessels cant their ballast — rattling **rubbish**!
Once let the sect, triumphant to their text,
Shut Nero up from Saturday till Monday,
And sure as fate they will deny us next
To see the Dandelions on a Sunday —
But what is your opinion, Mrs. Grundy?

MORNING MEDITATIONS.

LET Taylor preach, upon a morning breezy,
How well to rise while nights and larks are **flying** —
For my part, getting up seems not so easy
By half as *lying*.

What if the lark does carol in the **sky**,
Soaring beyond the sight to find him out —
Wherefore am I to rise at such a fly?
I'm not a trout.

Talk not to me of bees and such-like **hums**,
The smell of sweet herbs at the morning prime —
Only lie long enough, and bed becomes
A bed of *time*.

To me Dan Phœbus and his car are naught,
His steeds that paw impatiently about,—
Let them enjoy, say I, as horses ought,
The first turn-out!

Right beautiful the dewy maids appear
Besprinkled by the rosy-fingered girl;
What then,— if I prefer my pillow-beer
To early pearl?

My stomach is not ruled by other men's,
And, grumbling for a reason, quaintly begs
Wherefore should master rise before the hens
Have laid their eggs?

Why from a comfortable pillow start
To see faint flushes in the east awaken?
A fig, say I, for any streaky part,
Excepting bacon.

An early riser Mr. Gray has drawn,
Who used to haste the dewy grass among,
"To meet the sun upon the upland lawn,"—
Well — he died young.

With charwomen such early hours agree,
And sweeps that earn betimes their bit and sup,
But I'm no climbing boy, and need not be
All up — all up!

So here I lie, my morning calls deferring,
Till something nearer to the stroke of noon; —
A man that's fond precociously of *stirring*,
Must be a spoon.

A BLACK JOB.

"No doubt the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated as to cheat." — HUDIBRAS.

THE history of human-kind to trace
Since Eve — the first of dupes — our doom unriddled,
A certain portion of the human race
Has certainly a taste for being diddled.

Witness the famous Mississippi dreams!
A rage that time seems only to redouble —
The Banks, Joint-Stocks, and all the flimsy schemes
For rolling in Pactolian streams,
That cost our modern rogues so little trouble.
No matter what,— to pasture cows on stubble,
To twist sea-sand into a solid rope,
To make French bricks and fancy bread of rubble,
Or light with gas the whole celestial cope —
Only propose to blow a bubble,
And, Lord! what hundreds will subscribe for soap!

Soap! it reminds me of a little tale,
Though not a pig's, the hawbuck's glory,
When rustic games and merriment prevail —
But here 's my story:
Once on a time — no matter when —
A knot of very charitable men
Set up a Philanthropical Society,
Professing on a certain plan
To benefit the race of man,
And in particular that dark variety,
Which some suppose inferior — as in vermin,
The sable is to ermine,
As smut to flour, as coal to alabaster,
As crows to swans, as soot to driven snow,

As blacking, or as ink to "milk below"
Or yet, a better simile to show,
As ragman's dolls to images in plaster!

However, as is usual in our city,
They had a sort of managing Committee,
A board of grave, responsible Directors —
A Secretary, good at pen and ink —
A Treasurer, of course, to keep the chink,
And quite an army of Collectors!
Not merely male, but female duns,
Young, old, and middle-aged — of all degrees —
With many of those persevering ones,
Who mite by mite would beg a cheese!
And what might be their aim?
To rescue Afric's sable sons from fetters —
To save their bodies from the burning shame
Of branding with hot letters —
Their shoulders from the cowhide's bloody strokes,
Their necks from iron yokes?
To end or mitigate the ills of slavery,
The Planter's avarice, the Driver's knavery?
To school the heathen negroes and enlighten 'em
To polish up and brighten 'em,
And make them worthy of eternal bliss?
Why, no — the simple end and aim was this —
Reading a well-known proverb much amiss —
To wash and whiten 'em!

They looked so ugly in their sable hides;
So dark, so dingy, like a grubby lot
Of sooty sweeps, or colliers, and besides,
However the poor elves
Might wash themselves,

Nobody knew if they were clean or not —
On Nature's fairness they were quite a blot!
Not to forget more serious complaints
That even while they joined in pious hymn,
So black they were and grim,
In face and limb,
They looked like Devils, though they sang like Saints!
The thing was undeniable!
They wanted washing! not that slight ablution
To which the skin of the white man is liable,
Merely removing transient pollution —
But good, hard, honest, energetic rubbing
And scrubbing,
Sousing each sooty frame from heels to head
With stiff, strong saponaceous lather,
And pails of water — hottish rather,
But not so boiling as to turn 'em red!

So spoke the philanthropic man
Who laid, and hatched, and nursed the plan —
And, O! to view its glorious consummation!
The brooms and mops,
The tubs and slops,
The baths and brushes in full operation!
To see each Crow, or Jim, or John,
Go in a raven and come out a swan!
While fair as Cavendishes, Vanes, and Russels,
Black Venus rises from the soapy surge.
And all the little Niggerlings emerge
As lily-white as mussels.

Sweet was the vision — but, alas!
However in prospectus bright and sunny.
To bring such visionary scenes to pass
One thing was requisite, and that was — money!

Money, that pays the laundress and her bills,
For socks, and collars, shirts, and frills,
Cravats, and kerchiefs — money, without which
The Negroes must remain as dark as pitch;
A thing to make all Christians sad and shivery,
To think of millions of immortal souls
Dwelling in bodies black as coals,
And living — so to speak — in Satan's livery!

Money — the root of evil — dross and stuff!
But, O! how happy ought the rich to feel,
Whose means enabled them to give enough
To blanch an African from head to heel!
How blessed — yea, thrice blessed — to subscribe
Enough to scour a tribe!
While he whose fortune was at best a brittle one.
Although he gave but pence, how sweet to know
He helped to bleach a Hottentot's great toe,
Or little one!

Moved by this logic, or appalled,
To persons of a certain turn so proper,
The money came when called,
In silver, gold, and copper,
Presents from "friends to blacks," or foes to whites,
"Trifles," and "offerings," and "widow's mites,"
Plump legacies, and yearly benefactions,
With other gifts
And charitable lifts,
Printed in lists and quarterly transactions.
As thus — Elisha Brettel,
An iron kettle.
The Dowager Lady Scannel,
A piece of flannel.
Rebecca Pope,
A bar of soap.

The Misses Howels,
Half-a-dozen towels.
The Master Rush's
Two scrubbing-brushes.
Mr. T. Groom,
A stable-broom,
And Mrs. Grubb,
A tub.

Great were the sums collected!
And great results in consequence expected.
But somehow. in the teeth of all endeavor.
According to reports
At yearly courts,
The Blacks, confound them! were as black as ever!

Yes! spite of all the water soused aloft,
Soap, plain and mottled, hard and soft,
Soda and pearlash, huckaback and sand,
Brooms, brushes, palm of hand,
And scourers in the office strong and clever,
In spite of all the tubbing, rubbing, scrubbing,
The routing and the grubbing,
The Blacks, confound them! were as black as ever!

In fact, in his perennial speech,
The Chairman owned the Niggers did not bleach,
As he had hoped,
From being washed and soaped,
A circumstance he named with grief and pity;
But still he had the happiness to say,
For self and the Committee,
By persevering in the present way,
And scrubbing at the Blacks from day to day,
Although he could not promise perfect white,
From certain symptoms that had come to light,
He hoped in time to get them gray!

Lulled by this vague assurance,
The friends and patrons of the sable tribe
Continued to subscribe,
And waited, waited on with much endurance —
Many a frugal sister, thrifty daughter —
Many a stinted widow, pinching mother —
With income by the tax made somewhat shorter,
Still paid implicitly her crown per quarter,
Only to hear, as every year came round,
That Mr. Treasurer had spent her pound;
And as she loved her sable brother,
That Mr. Treasurer must have another!

But, spite of pounds or guineas,
Instead of giving any hint
Of turning to a neutral tint,
The plaguy Negroes and their piccaninnies
Were still the color of the bird that caws —
Only some very aged souls,
Showing a little gray upon their polls,
Like daws!

However, nothing dashed
By such repeated failures, or abashed,
The Court still met; — the Chairman and Directors,
The Secretary, good at pen and ink,
The worthy Treasurer, who kept the chink,
And all the cash Collectors;
With hundreds of that class, so kindly credulous,
Without whose help no charlatan alive
Or Bubble Company could hope to thrive,
Or busy Chevalier, however sedulous —
Those good and easy innocents, in fact,
Who, willingly receiving chaff for corn,
As pointed out by Butler's tact,

Still find a secret pleasure in the act
Of being plucked and shorn!

However, in long hundreds there they were,
Thronging the hot, and close, and dusty court,
To hear once more addresses from the Chair,
And regular Report.
Alas! concluding in the usual strain,
That what with everlasting wear and tear,
The scrubbing-brushes had n't got a hair —
The brooms — mere stumps — would never serve again —
The soap was gone, the flannels all in shreds,
The towels worn to threads,
The tubs and pails too shattered to be mended —
And what was added with a deal of pain,
But as accounts correctly would explain,
Though thirty thousand pounds had been expended —
The Blackamoors had still been washed in vain!

"In fact, the Negroes were as black as ink,
Yet, still as the Committee dared to think,
And hoped the proposition was not rash,
A rather free expenditure of cash —"
But ere the prospect could be made more sunny —
Up jumped a little, lemon-colored man,
And with an eager stammer, thus began,
In angry earnest, though it sounded funny:
"What! More subscriptions! No — no — no,— not I!
You have had time — time — time enough to try!
They WON'T come white! then why — why — why — why
— why,
More money?"

"Why!" said the Chairman, with an accent bland,
And gentle waving of his dexter hand,
"Why must we have more dross, and dirt, and dust,

More filthy lucre, in a word more gold —
The why, sir, very easily is told,
Because Humanity declares we must!
We 've scrubbed the Negroes till we 've nearly killed 'em.
And, finding that we cannot wash them white,
But still their nigritude offends the sight,
We mean to gild 'em!"

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQUIRE.

"Close, close your eyes with holy dread,
And weave a circle round him thrice;
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise!"— COLERIDGE.

"It 's very hard them kind of men
Won't let a body be."— OLD BALLAD.

A WANDERER, Wilson, from my native land,
Remote, O Rae, from godliness and thee,
Where rolls between us the eternal sea,
Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—
Beyond the broadest Scotch of London Wall;
Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call;
Across the wavy waste between us stretched,
A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,
Wherein my likeness you have darkly etched,
And though I have not seen the shadow sketched,
Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features: — in a line to paint
Their moral ugliness, I 'm not a saint.
Not one of those self-constituted saints,
Quacks — not physicians — in the cure of souls.
Censors who sniff out moral taints,
And call the devil over his own coals —
Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,
Who write down judgments with a pen hard-nibbed:

Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,
Commending sinners not to ice thick-ribbed,
But endless flames, to scorch them like flax,—
Yet sure of heaven themselves, as if they 'd cribbed
The impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace
Exists, I know, in my fictitious face;
There wants a certain cast about the eye;
A certain lifting of the nose's tip;
A certain curling of the nether lip,
In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky;
In brief, it is an aspect deleterious,
A face decidedly not serious,
A face profane, that would not do at all
To make a face at Exeter Hall,—
That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and pray.
And laud each other face to face,
Till every farthing-candle *ray*
Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace!

Well! — be the graceless lineaments confest!
I do enjoy this bounteous beauteous earth;
And dote upon a jest
"Within the limits of becoming mirth;"—
No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,
Nor think I 'm pious when I 'm only bilious —
Nor study in my sanctum supercilious
To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.
I pray for grace — repent each sinful act —
Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible;
And love my neighbor, far too well, in fact,
To call and twit him with a godly tract
That 's turned by application to a libel.
My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,
All creeds I view with toleration thorough.

And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.

What else? No part I take in party fray,
With tropes from Billingsgate's slang-whanging Tartars,
I fear no Pope — and let great Ernest play
At Fox and Goose with Fox's Martyrs!
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,
I own I shake my sides at ranters,
And treat sham Abr'am saints with wicked banters,
I even own, that there are times — but then
It 's when I 've got my wine — I say d—— canters!

I 've no ambition to enact the spy
On fellow-souls, a spiritual Pry —
'T is said that people ought to guard their noses
Who thrust them into matters none of theirs:
And, though no delicacy discomposes
Your saint, yet I consider faith and prayers
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,
No food was fit to eat till I had chewed it.

On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk;
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk, —
For man may pious texts repeat,
And yet religion have no inward seat;
'T is not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,
A man has got his belly full of meat
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth!

Mere verbiage, — it is not worth a carrot!
Why, Socrates or Plato — where 's the odds? —

Once taught a Jay to supplicate the gods,
And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot!

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is
Not a whit better than a Mantis,—
An insect, of what clime I can't determine,
That lifts its paws most parson-like, and thence,
By simple savages — through sheer pretence —
Is reckoned quite a saint amongst the vermin.
But where 's the reverence, or where the *nous*
To ride on one's religion through the lobby,
Whether as stalking-horse or hobby,
To show its pious paces to "the house."

I honestly confess that I would hinder
The Scottish member's legislative rigs,
That spiritual Pindar,
Who looks on erring souls as straying pigs,
That must be lashed by law, wherever found,
And driven to church as to the parish pound.
I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,
I view that grovelling idea as one
Worthy some parish clerk's ambitious son,
A charity-boy who longs to be a beadle.
On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd
How much a man can differ from his neighbor;
One wishes worship freely given to God,
Another wants to make it statute-labor —
The broad distinction in a line to draw,
As means to lead us to the skies above,
You say — Sir Andrew and his love of law.
And I — the Saviour with his law of love.

Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,
Like the magnetic needle to the Pole;

But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,
Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than knowledge,
Fresh from St. Andrew's college,
Should nail the conscious needle to the north?
I do confess that I abhor and shrink
From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,
That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink
The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly —
My soul revolts at such bare hypocrisy,
And will not, dare not, fancy in accord
The Lord of Hosts with an exclusive lord
Of this world's aristocracy.
It will not own a notion so unholy,
As thinking that the rich by easy trips
May go to heaven, whereas the poor and lowly
Must work their passage, as they do in ships.

One place there is — beneath the burial-sod,
Where all mankind are equalized by death;
Another place there is — the Fane of God,
Where all are equal who draw living breath; —
Juggle who will *elsewhere* with his own soul,
Playing the Judas with a temporal dole —
He who can come beneath that awful cope,
In the dread presence of a Maker just,
Who metes to every pinch of human dust
One even measure of immortal hope —
He who can stand within that holy door,
With soul unbowed by that pure spirit-level,
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor, —
Might sit for Hell, and represent the Devil!

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,
In your last journey-work, perchance, you ravage,
Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say
I 'm but a heedless, creedless, godless, savage;

A very Guy, deserving fire and fagots,—
A scoffer, always on the grin,
And sadly given to the mortal sin
Of liking Mawworms less than merry maggots!

The humble records of my life to search,
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts;
But sometimes I have "sat at good men's feasts,"
And I have been "where bells have knolled to church."
Dear bells! how sweet the sound of village bells
When on the undulating air they swim!
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as farewells!
And trembling all about the breezy dells,
As fluttered by the wings of Cherubim.
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;
And lost to sight the ecstatic lark above
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love,
With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon:—
O pagans, heathens, infidels, and doubters!
If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,
Will the harsh voices of church cads and touters?

A man may cry Church! Church! at every word,
With no more piety than other people—
A daw 's not reckoned a religious bird
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple;
The Temple is a good, a holy place,
But quacking only gives it an ill savor;
While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,
And bring religion's self into disfavor!

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon.
Who, binding up his Bible with his ledger,
Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,

Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,
Against the wicked remnant of the week,
A saving bet against his sinful bias —
"Rogue that I am," he whispers to himself,
"I lie — I cheat — do anything for pelf,
But who on earth can say I am not pious!"

In proof how over-righteousness reäcts,
Accept an anecdote well based on facts;
On Sunday morning — (at the day don't fret) —
In riding with a friend to Ponder's End
Outside the stage, we happened to commend
A certain mansion that we saw To Let.
"Ay," cried our coachman, with our talk to grapple,
"You 're right! no house along the road comes nigh!"
'T was built by the same man as built yon chapel,
And master wanted once to buy it,—
But t' other driv the bargain much too hard,—
He axed sure-*ly* a sum prodigious!
But being so particular religious,
Why, *that*, you see, put master on his guard!"
Church is "a little heaven below,
I have been there and still would go,"—
Yet I am none of those who think it odd
A man can pray unbidden from the cassock,
And, passing by the customary hassock
Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,
And sue in formâ pauperis to God.

As for the rest,— intolerant to none,
Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,
Even the poor pagan's homage to the sun
I would not harshly scorn, lest even there
I spurned some elements of Christian prayer

An aim, though erring, at a "world ayont"—
Acknowledgment of good — of man's futility,
A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed
That very thing so many Christians want —
Humility.

Such, unto Papists, Jews or Turbaned Turks,
Such is my spirit — (I don't mean my wraith!)
Such, may it please you, is my humble faith;
I know, full well, you do not like my *works!*

I have not sought, 't is true, the Holy Land,
As full of texts as Cuddie Hedrigg's mother,
The Bible in one hand,
And my own commonplace-book in the other —
But you have been to Palestine — alas!
Some minds improve by travel — others, rather,
Resemble copper wire or brass,
Which gets the narrower by going farther!

Worthless are all such pilgrimages — very!
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive
The human heats and rancor to revive
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury.
A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,
To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,
Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,
Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and smoke,
At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,
Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull
Haunts an old woman in a scarlet cloak.

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,
Scotland, renowned for sanctity of old,
Far distant Catholics to rate and scold
For — doing as the Romans do at Rome?

With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit
The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,
About the graceless images to flit,
And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,
Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch collops? —
People who hold such absolute opinions
Should stay at home in Protestant dominions,
Not travel like male Mrs. Trollopes.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,
Yet weak at the same time,
Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,
That grasps the nearest stem with tendril rings;
And as the climate and the soil may grant,
So is the sort of tree to which it clings.
Consider, then, before, like Hurlothrumbo,
You aim your club at any creed on earth,
That, by the simple accident of birth,
You might have been High Priest to Mumbo Jumbo.

For me — through heathen ignorance perchance,
Not having knelt in Palestine,— I feel
None of that griffinish excess of zeal,
Some travellers would blaze with here in France.
Dolls I can see in Virgin-like array,
Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker
Like crazy Quixotte at the puppet's play,
If their "offence be rank," should mine be *rancor*?

Mild, light, and by degrees, should be the plan
To cure the dark and erring mind;
But who would rush at a benighted man,
And give him two black eyes for being blind?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop
Around a cankered stem should twine.

What Kentish boor would tear away the prop
So roughly as to wound, nay, kill the bine?

The images, 't is true, are strangely dressed,
With gauds and toys extremely out of season;
The carving nothing of the very best,
The whole repugnant to the eye of Reason,
Shocking to Taste, and to Fine Arts a treason —
Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect
One truly *Catholic*, one common form,
At which unchecked
All Christian hearts may kindle or keep warm.

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,
One bright and balmy morning, as I went
From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,
That made me breathe a prayer upon the spot —
While Nature of herself, as if to trace
The emblem's use, had trailed around its base
The blue significant Forget-Me-Not?
Methought, the claims of Charity to urge
More forcibly along with Faith and Hope,
The pious choice had pitched upon the verge
Of a delicious slope,
Giving the eye much variegated scope! —
"Look round," it whispered, "on that prospect rare,
Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue;
Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,
But"— (how the simple legend pierced me through!)
"PRIEZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX."

With sweet kind natures, as in honeyed cells,
Religion lives, and feels herself at home;
But only on a formal visit dwells
Where wasps instead of bees have formed the comb.

Shun pride, O Rae! — whatever sort beside
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!
A pride there is of rank — a pride of birth,
A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
A London pride — in short, there be on earth
A host of prides, some better and some worse;
But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and hard,
Fancy a peacock in a poultry-yard.
Behold him in conceited circles sail,
Strutting and dancing, and now planted stiff,
In all his pomp of pageantry, as if
He felt "the eyes of Europe" on his tail!
As for the humble breed retained by man,
He scorns the whole domestic clan —
He bows, he bridles,
He wheels, he sidles,
As last, with stately dodgings in a corner,
He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her
Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!

"Look here," he cries, (to give him words,)
"Thou feathered clay,— thou scum of birds!"
Flirting the rustling plumage in her eyes,—
"Look here, thou vile predestined sinner,
Doomed to be roasted for a dinner,
Behold these lovely variegated dyes!
These are the rainbow colors of the skies,
That heaven has shed upon me *con amore*
A Bird of Paradise? — a pretty story!
I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!
Look at my crown of glory!
Thou dingy, dirty, dabbled, draggled jill!"

And off goes Partlett, wriggling from a kick,
With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!

That little simile exactly paints
How sinners are despised by saints.
By saints! — the Hypocrites that ope heaven's door
Obsequious to the sinful man of riches —
But put the wicked, naked, bare-legged poor,
In parish stocks, instead of breeches.

The Saints? — the Bigots that in public spout,
Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian,
And go like walking "Lucifers" about
Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints! — the aping Fanatics that talk
All cant and rant and rhapsodies high flown —
That bid you balk
A Sunday walk,
And shun God's work as you should shun your own.

The Saints! — the Formalists, the extra pious,
Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,
By trundling, with a mere mechanic bias,
To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints! — the Pharisees, whose beadle stands
Beside a stern coërcive kirk,
A piece of human mason-work,
Calling all sermons contrabands,
In that great Temple that's not made with hands!

Thrice blessed, rather, is the man with whom
The gracious prodigality of nature,
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,
The bounteous providence in every feature,
Recall the good Creator to his creature,
Making all earth a fane, all heaven its dome!

To *his* tuned spirit the wild heather-bells
Ring Sabbath knells;
The jubilate of the soaring lark
Is chant of clerk;
For Choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet;
The sod 's a cushion for his pious want;
And, consecrated by the heaven within it,
The sky-blue pool, a font.
Each cloud-capped mountain is a holy altar;
An organ breathes in every grove;
And the full heart 's a Psalter,
Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love!

Sufficiently by stern necessitarians
Poor Nature, with her face begrimed by dust,
Is stoked, coked, smoked, and almost choked; but must
Religion have its own Utilitarians,
Labelled with evangelical phylacteries,
To make the road to heaven a railway trust,
And churches — that 's the naked fact — mere factories?

O! simply open wide the temple door,
And let the solemn, swelling organ greet,
With *Voluntaries* meet,
The *willing* advent of the rich and poor!
And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,
With rich vibrations from the vocal throng —
From quiet shades that to the woods belong,
And brooks with music of their own,
Voices may come to swell the choral song
With notes of praise they learned in musings lone.

How strange it is, while on all vital questions,
That occupy the House and public mind,
We always meet with some humane suggestions
Of gentle measures of a healing kind.

Instead of harsh severity and vigor,
The saint alone his preference retains
For bills of penalties and pains,
And marks his narrow code with legal rigor!
Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,
What men of all political persuasion
Extol — and even use upon occasion —
That Christian principle, conciliation?
But possibly the men who make such fuss
With Sunday pippins and old Trots infirm,
Attach some other meaning to the term,
As thus:

One market morning, in my usual rambles,
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,
Where meat was hung in many a joint and quarter,
I had to halt a while, like other folks,
To let a killing butcher coax
A score of lambs and fatted sheep to slaughter.
A sturdy man he looked to fell an ox,
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak
Of well-greased hair down either cheek,
As if he dee-dash—dee'd some other flocks
Besides those woolly-headed stubborn blocks
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle —
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers grouped,
While, now and then, a thirsty creature stooped
And meekly snuffed, but did not taste the puddle.

Fierce barked the dog, and many a blow was dealt
That loin, and chump, and scrag and saddle felt,
Yet still, that fatal step they all declined it,—
And shunned the tainted door as if they smelt
Onions, mint-sauce, and lemon-juice behind it.

At last there came a pause of brutal force;
The cur was silent, for his jaws were full
Of tangled locks of tarry wool;
The man had whooped and bellowed till dead hoarse,
The time was ripe for mild expostulation,
And thus it stammered from a stander-by —
"Zounds! — my good fellow,— it quite makes me — why
It really — my dear fellow — do just try
Conciliation!"

Stringing his nerves like flint,
The sturdy butcher seized upon the hint,—
At least he seized upon the foremost wether,—
And hugged and lugged and tugged him neck and crop
Just *nolens volens* through the open shop —
If tails come off he did n't care a feather,—
Then walking to the door, and smiling grim,
He rubbed his forehead and his sleeve together —
"There! — I 've *con*ciliated him!"

Again — good-humoredly to end our quarrel —
(Good humor should prevail!)
I 'll fit you with a tale
Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass
Was seized with symptoms of such deep decline,
Cough, hectic flushes, every evil sign,
That, as their wont is at such desperate pass,
The doctors gave her over — to an ass.

Accordingly, the grisly Shade to bilk,
Each morn the patient quaffed a frothy bowl
Of assinine new milk,
Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal
Which got proportionably spare and skinny —

Meanwhile the neighbors cried "Poor Mary Ann!
She can't get over it! she never can!"
When, lo! to prove each prophet was a ninny,
The one that died was the poor wet-nurse Jenny.

To aggravate the case,
There were but two grown donkeys in the place;
And, most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,
The other long-eared creature was a male,
Who never in his life had given a pail
Of milk, or even chalk and water.
No matter: at the usual hour of eight
Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,
With Mister Simon Gubbins on his back,—
"Your sarvant, Miss,— a werry spring-like day,—
Bad time for hasses, though! good lack! good lack!
Jenny be dead, Miss,— but I'ze brought ye Jack,—
He does n't give no milk — but he can bray."
So runs the story,
And, in vain self-glory,
Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for his blindness;
But what the better are their pious saws
To ailing souls, than dry hee-haws,
Without the milk of human kindness?

A TABLE OF ERRATA.

(*Hostess loquitur.*)

WELL! thanks be to Heaven,
The summons is given;
It's only gone seven,
And should have been six;
There's fine overdoing
In roasting and stewing,

And victuals past chewing
To rags and to sticks!

How dreadfully chilly!
I shake, willy-nilly;
That John is so silly,
And never will learn
This plate is a cold one,
That cloth is an old one,—
I wish they had told one
The lamp would n't burn,

Now then for some blunder
For nerves to sink under:
I never shall wonder,
Whatever goes ill.
That fish is a riddle!
It 's broke in the middle.
A Turbot! a fiddle!
It 's only a Brill!

It 's quite over-boiled too,
The butter is oiled too,
The soup is all spoiled too,
It 's nothing but slop.
The smelts looking flabby,
The soles are as dabby,
It all is so shabby
That Cook shall not stop!

As sure as the morning,
She gets a month's warning.
My orders for scorning —
There 's nothing to eat!
I hear such a rushing,
I feel such a flushing,

I know I am blushing
As red as a beet!

Friends flatter and flatter,
I wish they would chatter;
What *can* be the matter
That nothing comes next?
How very unpleasant!
Lord! there is the pheasant!
Not wanted at present,
I 'm born to be vext!

The pudding brought on too,
And aiming at ton too!
And where is that John too.
The plague that he is?
He 's off on some ramble:
And there is Miss Campbell,
Enjoying the scramble,
Detestable Quiz!

The veal they all eye it,
But no one will try it,
An Ogre would shy it
So ruddy as that!
And as for the mutton,
The cold dish it 's put on
Converts to a button
Each drop of the fat.

The beef without mustard!
My fate 's to be flustered,
And there comes the custard
To eat with the hare!
Such flesh, fowl, and fishing,
Such waiting and dishing,

I cannot help wishing
A woman might swear!

O dear! did I ever —
But no, I did never —
Well, come, that is clever,
To send up the brawn!
That cook, I could scold her,
Gets worse as she 's older;
I wonder who told her
That woodcocks are drawn!

It 's really audacious!
I cannot look gracious;
Lord help the voracious
That came for a cram!
There 's Alderman Fuller
Gets duller and duller.
Those fowls, by the color,
Were boiled with the ham!

Well, where is the curry?
I 'm all in a flurry.
No, Cook 's in no hurry —
A stoppage again!
And John makes it wider,
A pretty provider!
By bringing up cider
Instead of champagne!

My troubles come faster!
There 's my lord and master
Detects each disaster,
And hardly can sit:
He cannot help seeing,

All things disagreeing;
If *he* begins d—ing
I 'm off in a fit!

This cooking?! — it 's messing!
The spinach wants pressing,
And salads in dressing
Are best with good eggs.
And John — yes, already —
Has had something heady,
That makes him unsteady
In keeping his legs.

How *shall* I get through it?
I never can do it,
I 'm quite looking to it,
To sink by and by.
O! would I were dead now,
Or up in my bed now,
To cover my head now,
And have a good cry!

NOTES.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, pp. 163–228.

Many of these minor poems were originally published in the *London Magazine:* among them *Fair Ines*, *The Departure of Summer*, *Autumn*, *Hymn to the Sun*, *To a Cold Beauty*, *The Sea of Death*, and a number of the Sonnets. The favorite song *I Remember, I Remember*, first appeared in *Friendship's Offering* for 1826; the *Ode to the Moon* in *Blackwood's Magazine*. All these were reprinted in the author's first volume of poems, published in 1827. In the same volume appeared the *Ode to Melancholy*, perhaps the most remarkable of his serious poems, so plaintive, so full of melody, so rich in imagery, so infused with the poetical element of the author's character and disposition. There is nothing that Hood has written which so opens the inner sanctuary of his nature—so lays bare his heart of hearts. This ode may rank with the odes of Collins, and is of itself sufficient to establish a poet's fame.

The Death Bed was the author's only poetical communication to the *Englishman's Magazine*, a journal started by Moxon on the decline of the *London*, but which lived only half a year. *The Key* appeared in *Hood's Magazine* for March, 1844. From the Ballad on page 217, two stanzas were omitted by the author, which have since been published:

What else could peer thy glowing cheek,
  That tears began to stud?
And when I asked the like of love,
  You snatched a damask bud;

And oped it to the dainty core,
  Still glowing to the last,—
It was the Time of Roses,
  We pluck'd them as we pass'd!

MISS KILMANSEGG AND HER PRECIOUS LEG, p. 231.

From the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1840.

A TALE OF A TRUMPET, p. 307.

From the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1841.

The following curious passage is quoted for the benefit of such Readers as are afflicted, like Dame Spearing, with Deafness, and one of its concomitants, a singing or ringing in the head. The extract is taken from "Quid pro Quo; or A Theory of Compensation. By P. S." (perhaps Peter Shard), folio edition.

"Soe tenderly kind and gratious is Nature, our Mother, that She seldom or never puts upon us any Grievaunce without making Us Some Amends, which, if not a full and perfect Equivalent, is yet a great Solace or Salve to the Sore. As is notably displaid in the Case of such of our Fellow Creatures as undergoe the Loss of Heering, and are thereby deprived of the Comfort and Entertainment of Natural Sounds. In lew whereof the Deaf Man, as testified by mine own Experience, is regaled with an inward Music that is not vouchsafed unto a person who hath the Complete Usage of his Ears. For note, that the Selfsame Condition of Boddy which is most apt to bring on a Surdity,—namely, a general Relaxing of the delicate and Subtile Fibres of the Human Nerves, and mainly such as belong and propingue to the Auricular Organ, this very Unbracing which silences the Tympanum, or drum, is the most instrumental Cause in producing a Consort in the head. And, in particular, that affection which the Physitians have called Tinnitus, by reason of its Resemblance to a Ring of Bells. The Absence of which, as a National Musick, would be a sore Loss and Discomfort to any Native of the Low Countryes, where the Steeples and Church-Towers with their Carillons maintain an almost endlesse Tingle; seeing that before one quarterly Chime of the Cloke hath well ended, another must by Time's Command strike up its Tune. On which Account, together with its manye waterish Swamps and Marshes, the Land of Flandres is said by the Wits to be Ringing Wet. Such Campanulary Noises would alsoe be heavily mist and lamented by the Inhabitants of that Ringing Island described by Rabelais in his Works as a Place constantly filled with a Corybantick Jingle Jangle of great, middle-sized, and little Bells; wherewith the People seem to be as much charmed as a Swarm of Bees with the Clanking of brazen Kettles and Pans. And which

Ringing Island cannot of a surety be Barbadoes, as certain Authors have supposed, but rather our own tintinnabulary Island of Britain, where formerly a Saxon could not soe much as quench a Fire or a Candle but to the tune of a Bell. And even to this day, next to the Mother Tongue, the one mostly used is in a Mouth of Mettal, and withal so loosely hung, that it must needs wag at all Times and on all Topicks. For your English Man is a Mighty Ringer, and besides furnishing Bells to a Bellfry, doth hang them at the Head of his Horse, and at the Neck of his Sheep, on the Cap of his Fool, and on the Heels of his Hawk. And truly I have known more than one amongst my Country Men, who would undertake more Travel, and Cost besides, to heer a Peal of Grandsires, than they would bestow to look upon a generation of Grandchildren. But alake! all these Bells with the huge Muscovite, and Great Tom of Lincoln to boot, be but as Dumb Bells to the Deaf Man: wherefore, as I said, Nature kindly steps in with a Compensation, to wit, a Tinnitus, and converts his own Head into a Bellfry, whence he hath Peals enow, and what is more, without having to pay the Ringers."

THE FORGE, p. 342.

From the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1843.

FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN, p. 359.

Published in the first series of *Whims and Oddities*, with the following introduction.

"I have never been vainer of any verses than of my part in the following Ballad. Dr. Watts, amongst evangelical nurses, has an enviable renown—and Campbell's Ballads enjoy a snug, genteel popularity. 'Sally Brown' has been favored, perhaps, with as wide a patronage as the Moral Songs, though its circle may not have been of so select a class as the friends of 'Hohenlinden.' But I do not desire to see it amongst what are called Elegant Extracts. The lamented Emery, drest as Tom Tug, sang it at his last mortal Benefit at Convent Garden;—and, ever since, it has been a great favorite with the watermen of Thames, who time their oars to it, as the wherry-men of Venice time theirs to the lines of Tasso. With the watermen, it went naturally to Vauxhall:—and, over land, to Sadler's Wells. The Guards, not the mail coach, but the Life Guards,—picked it out from a fluttering hundred of others—all going to one

air—against the dead wall at Knightsbridge. Cheap Printers of Shoe Lane, and Cowcross, (all pirates!) disputed about the Copyright, and published their own editions,—and, in the meantime, the Authors, to have made bread of their song, (it was poor old Homer's hard ancient case!) must have sung it about the streets. Such is the lot of Literature! the profits of 'Sally Brown' were divided by the Ballad Mongers:—it has cost, but has never brought me, a half-penny."

AN OPEN QUESTION, p. 437.

There is an anecdote of a Scotch Professor, who happened during a Sunday walk to be hammering at a geological specimen which he had picked up, when a peasant gravely accosted him, and said very seriously, "Eh! Sir, you think you are only breaking a stone, but you are breaking the Sabbath."

In a similar spirit, some of our over-righteous sectarians are fond of attributing all breakage to the same cause—from the smashing of a parish lamp up to the fracture of a human skull—the "breaking into the bloody house of life," or the breaking into a brick-built dwelling. They all originate in the breaking of the Sabbath. It is the source of every crime in the country—the parent of every illegitimate child in the parish. The picking of a pocket is ascribed to the picking of a daisy—the robbery on the highway to a stroll in the fields—the incendiary fire to a hot dinner—on Sunday. All other causes—the want of education—the want of moral culture—the want of bread itself—are totally repudiated. The criminal himself is made to confess at the gallows that he owes his appearance on the scaffold to a walk with "Sally in our alley" on the "day that comes between a Saturday and Monday!"

Supposing this theory to be correct, and made like the law "for every degree," the wonder of Captain Macheath that we haven't "better company at Tyburn tree" (now the New Drop) must be fully shared by every body who has visited the Ring in Hyde Park on the day in question. But how much greater must be the wonder of any person who has happened to reside, like myself, for a year or two in a Continental city, inhabited, according to the strict construction of our Mawworms, by some fifteen or twenty thousands of habitual Sabbath-breakers, and yet, without hearing of murder and robbery as often as of blood-sausages and of dollars! A city where

the Burgomaster himself must have come to a bad end, if a dance upon Sunday led so inevitably to a dance upon nothing!

The "Saints" having set up this absolute dependence of crime on Sabbath-breaking, their relative proportions become a fair statistical question; and, as such, the inquiry is seriously recommended to the rigid legislator, who acknowledges, indeed, that the Sabbath was "made for man," but, by a singular interpretation, conceives that the man for whom it was made is himself! — *Hood.*

Ode to Rae Wilson, p. 451.

This ode was first published in the *London Athenæum*, where it appeared with the following introductory letter.

"*To the Editor of the Athenæum.*

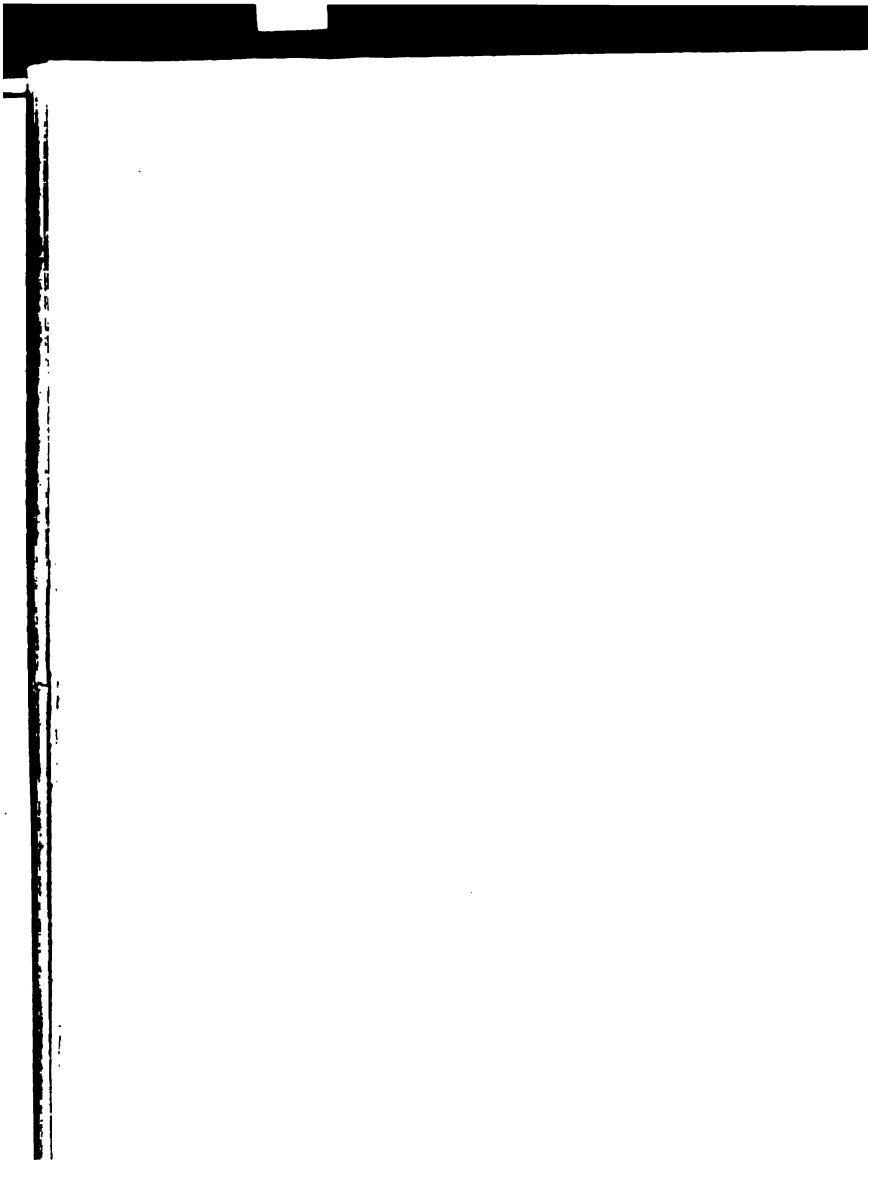
"My dear Sir: The following Ode was written anticipating the tone of some strictures on my writings, by the gentleman to whom it is addressed. I have not seen his book; but I know by hearsay that some of my verses are characterized as 'profaneness and ribaldry,' — citing, in proof, the description of a certain sow, from whose jaw a cabbage-sprout

> 'Protruded as the dove so stanch
> For peace supports an olive-branch.'

If the printed works of my Censor had not prepared me for any misapplication of *types*, I should have been surprised by this misapprehension of one of the commonest emblems. In some cases the dove unquestionably stands for the Divine Spirit; but the same bird is also a lay representative of the peace of this world, and, as such, has figured time out of mind in allegorical pictures. The sense in which it was used by me is plain from the context; at least, it would be plain to any one but a fisher for faults, predisposed to carp at some things, to dab at others, and to flounder in all. But I am possibly in error. It is the female swine, perhaps, that is profaned in the eyes of the Oriental tourist. Men find strange ways of marking their intolerance; and the spirit is certainly strong enough, in Mr. W.'s works, to set up a creature as sacred, in sheer opposition to the Mussulman, with whom she is a beast of abomination. It would only be going the whole sow.

"I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

"Thos. Hood."



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